The Georgian cuisine according to some national and international cookbooks

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Abstract: This article deals with how the Georgian cuisine is described and depicted in seventeen (17) different cookbooks. The main question asked in the paper is if there is a difference between how Georgia’s cuisine is depicted in cookbooks written by Georgians and foreigners. Before the survey Georgia’s geographical location will be presented followed by a section about the sources and source criticism. After the survey the article ends with a closing discussion about the results where the authors own impressions of the nation’s cuisine is included.

Keywords: Georgia (the nation), cookbooks as sources for research, statistics, economic-history, nationality.

JEL codes: L66, Q18.

1. Introduction

Georgia (Sakartvelo) is a transcontinental country in the Caucasus region, situated at the dividing line between Europe and Asia. The country’s geographical location with borders to the Black Sea, the modern Russian federation, Turkey, Armenia and Azerbaijan, has meant that through pre-history and history it has been a crossroad between the East and the West.

Due to its location, the country has been invaded several times over the course of history by for example the Greeks, Persians and the Ottomans, to name just a few. The invasions mean that much of the antique and Islamic worldview still exists at the country’s borders- which are a unique cultural situation. The invasions have also left its footprints on Georgia’s food- and drinking habits and traditions. This has resulted in the existence of many different gastronomical and culinary branches in the foodway’s of today’s Georgia.

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2. Sources and source criticism

Regarding the different cookbooks, ten (10) of them are written in English while the remaining seven (7) is written in Georgian. Overall it is not easy to get hold of books that deals with the Georgian Cuisine in English. The cookbooks that are available in Russian about the country’s food and beverage has not been taking into account here due to the fact that the author of the paper does not have good enough knowledge in Russian to work with them.


The books differ from each other; *Healthy and sick person’s food, encyclopedia of culinary* consists of 635 pages with few illustrations, *Georgian traditional dishes* consists of 227 pages divided into 12 chapters and are without illustrations, *Georgian Cuisine* is fully illustrated and has 151 pages. *Family cookbook* has 16 different sections, divided in 100 chapters. Out of the 100 chapters 62 are about food and beverage and the remaining chapters’ deals with housing in general. *Cuisine (Georgian and European dishes)* has 21 sections and presents 900 dishes in total in 458 pages. *Picante culinary and Georgian cuisine* consists of 329 pages and has few illustrations. *Art of culinary and Georgian cuisine* has illustrations for each chapter and consists of 426 pages divided into 15 chapters. *The best foods of Russia* has no illustrations and consists of 230 pages divided into 18 chapters. *Georgian dishes* consist of 163 numbered pages and the last part of the book (60 pages) is illustrations in full color photographs. *Culinaria Russia-Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan* is a cookbook that is highly illustrated with photographs in full color and consists of 371 pages. *Georgian dishes by Manuel* is also highly illustrated with full color photographs. *The Georgian feast* differs from the rest of the books in the sense that it is not only a cookbook but also a travelogue; the illustrations in the book are in black and white. *The Silk Road gourmet* is a book that deals with all of the countries along the Silk Road where today’s Georgia is one of them. *The classic cuisine of Soviet Georgia* deals with the cuisine in what is today’s Georgia during the Soviet Union era. *Georgian dishes* deals with the Georgian cuisine in general and is well illustrated. *Old Georgian cuisine* and *forgotten crops* are two books that differ from the others in the way that they only deal with old crops.⁵

As can be seen from the description above of the sources the books differ from each other a great deal and the books in Georgian has been written and published for readers within the country and has not been meant for a foreign public. The books in English are mainly written by foreigners that in one way or another have spent time in Georgia and that has fallen in love with the Georgian cuisine and has wanted to share the Georgian cuisine with the outside world. However the cookbooks in English without authors has been published in Tbilisi and therefore most likely been written by Georgian and those books are aiming for a foreign public in form of tourists. In the following text, the books that are written in Georgian by Georgian authors are named as “Georgian cookbooks” while the books written in English are named “foreign cookbooks”, the distinction is made since the main question for the paper is to study how the Georgian cuisine is described and depicted in national and international cookbooks.

3. Survey

3.1 Vegetarian dishes and salads

Graph 1 is showing the numbers of vegetarian dishes in the cookbooks that are included in the study and as one can see there is a big difference between the foreign cookbooks and the Georgian ones in the numbers of dishes that are represented in the books.

It is only in the category where nuts are the main ingredients that the numbers of recipes are the same. Both categories of cookbooks has the highest peak of recipes where the main ingredient is beans and/or peas, even if the Georgian cookbooks have a higher rate, in total 123 against the 72 in the foreign cookbooks. Beans and peas are very popular in Georgia and one is often treated with red beans with herbs (lobio) in a pot where the lid is made out of corn bread. The dish lobiani is also a very popular dish made out of red beans but the beans are put in dough and then fried in a pan. In the foreign cookbooks beans are also served with different sauces such as walnut sauce, plum sauce and pomegranate sauce and there is only one dish in this category where the beans are served with meat, in the foreign cookbooks it is lentils with meat and in the Georgian it is green beans with meat. Dishes out of green beans are more common in the Georgian books then in the foreign ones; they are served with vinegar and oil, eggs, walnut, tomato, eggplants, pomegranate and onions.6


Eggplant is also a very popular main ingredient in the vegetarian category, as for the beans and peas the Georgian books are in lead here as well with a total of 87 in comparison to the 27 in the foreign books. In the foreign cookbooks they are served fried with walnut sauce or minced walnuts, garlic and/or herbs, the pips of the vegetable are served in a form of caviar and it is boiled in a dish called Adjapsandali. The last mentioned dish is also very popular in the Georgian books and it is a boiled dish, one can call it a vegetarian stew where eggplants are the main ingredients along with other vegetables that one has at hand. A part from Adjapsandali eggplants (both fried and boiled) are served with walnuts, garlic and herbs, onions, sweet pepper, roasted (the eggplant has first been dried), paprika and rice, tomato, fried on sticks (filled or unfilled) and as caviar in the Georgian books.\(^7\)

The third most popular vegetarian main ingredients in both categories of books are mushrooms, even if the pattern is the same as for beans/peas and eggplants, they are more frequent in the Georgian cookbooks (41) than in the foreign ones (10). When a certain mushroom is specified it is only champignons in both categories of books, otherwise it is just labeled as mushrooms. Champignons are served with sulguni cheese, walnut, stewed and mushrooms in general with egg, fried, salted and pickled, lemon, with eggplant, walnut and as whole ones in the Georgian books. In the foreign cookbooks mushrooms are served with coriander and/or herbs, fried on a skewer and just fried.\(^8\) There is a difference between the two categories of books how mushrooms are prepared and served.

There is some difference in the two categories of cookbooks when it comes to certain vegetables such as asparagus, corn and cauliflower. Asparagus and corn are only found in the Georgian cookbooks and vice versa with the cauliflower. Asparagus is served with walnuts, juice, egg, sauce, eggplant and with toast and corn boiled with walnuts while the cauliflower is served with eggs. Potatoes is served with cheese, walnuts,\(^7\)

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sugar, as fresh, as puré, baked as potato puré, with tomato sauce, as potato pie, as potato pie with cheese in the Georgian books and as filling in bread, a kind of pancakes, with herbs and egg, walnuts and with mushrooms in clay pots in the other category of cookbooks. Spinach is served with walnut, stewed, fried and boiled eggs, oil, matsoni (dairy product), vinegar, boiled and mashed in the Georgian books and in the other category as a form of pâté and with cheese and beans. Tomatoes, both red and green are served as pickles, walnuts, walnut sauce, garlic, egg in the Georgian books and in the other category of books they are stuffed with herbs, dill and walnuts while pumpkin is served with walnut and sugar, fried, boiled, rolled into balls and as a kind of stew in the Georgian category and as boiled in the other category of cookbooks. As one can see both from the graph and from the text there is a difference between how the vegetarian dishes are depicted within the two categories of books.

Graph 2. Different kind of salads in the two categories of cookbooks in the study.


Graph 2 is showing the different kinds of salads that accous in the two categories of cookbooks used in this study, both categories has the largest number of vegetarian salads. In the foreign cookbook category there is no fish salads and vice versa when it comes to salads with the main ingredient of dairy and egg. The major part of the vegetarian salads in the georgian books consists of tomatoes, cucumbers, beetroots, carrots, green fresh herbs, potatoes, radishes, onions, cauliflower, asparagus, salt, champignons, oil, cabbage, mustard and vinegar. This ingredients are chopped and sliced in different sizes and mixed togather in different constellations. Potato salads, both warm and cold is also common. In the other category cucumber and tomato salad is the most common one. In the category of diary and egg it is a fresh herb and eggsalad and the fish salad is a salad described as a salad where one can use any fish that is at hand, the same goes for the meat salad and chicken is used in the bird salads.9


Fig 3. One salad that is very common and popular in Georgia is the tomato and cucumber salad.© Söderlind, Ulrica, 2008.

3.2 Soups

Graph 3 shows the different kind of soups that are represented in the cookbooks used in this study. Soups made out of meat are the most popular ones in both categories of books even if the difference in numbers between the groups is great. The Georgian cookbooks have overall more soups in all the categories than the foreign ones. Khasi is a popular soup in both categories of books and is also a very popular soup in general in Georgia, especially after a long night of drinking, the general opinion is that the soup is very good to prevent hangover. Beef is a popular main ingredient along with sheep, especially in the Georgian books. The next largest group of soups is vegetarian ones and that category follows the same pattern as the meat soups, far more in the Georgian books than in the foreign ones. In both categories of books the main ingredients is beans or peas even if soups made out of asparagus also occurs when it comes to vegetarian soups. In the group of dairy and egg soup sour milk and matsoni/yoghurt soups are in the lead in both categories of books. There are not a lot of soups made by fruits and/or berries but cornelian cherry, blackberry, tkhemali and
tklapı are used as main ingredients for these cold soups.11 Tkhemali is a fruit that belongs to the plum family and comes in different colours such as red, yellow and green. Tklapi is grape juice that has been dried in thin flakes and some are sour and some are sweet.

Graph 3. The different categories of soups that are represented in the cookbooks.

3.3 Egg dishes

The total amount of dishes where egg is the main ingredient in the foreign cookbooks is 12 and the recipe that occurs most of the times is boiled eggs with estragon. A part from that there is only different kinds of omelets such as tomato omelet, Georgian omelet and baked omelet with meat or vegetables, there is also one recipe where the eggs has been deep fried. In the Georgian books the total amount of recipes is 33 and the dish Kikliko (this dish is describe as either egg with bread or egg, erbo butter, salt and bread) is the most common dish followed by different kind of fried egg dishes such as; fried egg with onion, tomato, cabbage, cheese, meat, walnut and different kind of preserves. One also find egg Chimburi that is egg with oil, vinegar, salt and onion and filled egg that is a dish that contains butter, tarragon, salt, mayonnaise and arajhani a part from the eggs. Her one also finds the special red eggs that are only made for Easter.12 Interesting to see the clear difference in the egg dishes, in the foreign category omelets are most popular while Kikliko and fried eggs are the most popular ones in the Georgian category of books.

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As can be seen from graph 4 there is quite a difference when it comes to fish and shellfish dishes in the two categories of cookbooks. Fishes such as anchovy, barb, brill, cod, halibut and pike is only found in the Georgian cookbooks along with caviar and crab while fishes such as Georgian gefüllte fish, grey mullet and sheat-fish can only be found in the other category. The category that is named only as fish means that there is no specified species of fishes in the recipes, just fish so one can use any fish that is at hand. That category has the most recipes in both the categories of books even if there is a great difference in numbers between them. The fishes in this category in the foreign cookbooks are prepared as fried, grilled, baked or boiled and
sometimes they are marinated before cooking, they are served with coriander sauce, walnut and garlic sauce and pomegranate and walnut sauce. In the other category of books they are served as boiled (sometimes just the fish head), smoked, baked, fried, as cakes and they are served with pomegranate juice, champignon or mushrooms, onions, wine, served in clay pots with lemon or tomatoes.  

3.5 Meat

As can be seen from graph 5 the only wild animals that are used is deer, hare and/or rabbit in the cookbooks and deer is only found in the Georgian category. Beef, cow and calf is the most popular main ingredient in both categories of books and the category follow the previous ones with that it is a great difference in numbers between the Georgian and foreign cookbooks. As in the fish and shellfish category where there is a category only labeled as fish one finds here a category named as meat, and it follows the same pattern as for the fish, one is free to use the meat that is at hand. This category of meat is served as different kinds of marinated grilled meat, meatballs, meat-loafs, meat pie and as boiled with walnuts and onions in the foreign cookbooks and as boiled and sliced with egg, battered with tomatoes, meat pie, meat stew, fried in the oven, fried and slashed with tomatoes, boiled with different kind of vegetables, meat roulette with or without rice, fried and eaten cold, steamed and with green beans in the Georgian cookbooks. Pork or piglets are popular dishes and it seems like they are preferred to be fried on a stick or skewer, specially the piglets or suckling pigs. The dish called Khinkali is also popular in this category and one can

describe the dish as meat filled dumplings that are boiled, the dumplings are filled with minced meat, salt, pepper and if one likes with coriander.\textsuperscript{14}

Fig 5 and 6. Roasted whole piglet is very popular in Georgia and the piglet is cutted into smaller pieces before it is served at the table. Another popular dish in Khinkali and the illustration to the right shows a Khinkali cook in Pasanauri making meat Khinkali after an order has come in from the guest seated in the restaurant.© Söderlind, Ulrica, 2008, 2011.

One special kind of dishes among the meat dishes is the ones made out of intestines and in the foreign books one finds kupati (stuffed guts), liver in wine sauce or pomegranate sauce. In the Georgian books the variation is lot larger and one finds dishes such as the following; sliced and roasted liver and heart with or without eggs, boiled intestines from cow, fried belly with berberis, boiled belly with chili sauce, roasted intestines, fried liver, stewed liver, liver with pomegranate sauces, kupati from pig, tongue from cow, fried belly filled with meat served with tomato sauce, liver sausages, tongues served with or without different kind of saucses, tongue with rice, kidneys with onions, fried kidneys, kidneys with coriander and vinegar, fried or boiled brains with or with sauce, and fried spleens.\textsuperscript{15}

One special dish in this category that seems to be very popular is Mtsvadi; therefore I have given it its own staples in graph 5. Mtsvadi is fried meat; the most common way is to put pieces of meat on a stick or skewer and fry them over an open fire, the wood that is used is preferably cutted down old wine stocks. The wood gives the meat a special flavor and if wine stocks are not used for the fire it is common to put wine on the meat during the frying several times until the meat is done. Mtsvadi can be made out of sheep, beef or pork


meat, sometimes the pig legs is used. When the meat is prepared for the Mtsvadi it is called Basturma and cutted into the size one wants and salt, pepper, onion is added and sometimes also vinegar.\(^{16}\) However there is variation to the barbequed Mtsvadi, Mtsvadi can also be served with rice, with onion, erbo, vinegar, stock or water or one can use onion, erbo, vinegar, stock or water but the meat is first gently fried in a casserole and onions placed on top and the rest of the ingredients are added, a lid is put on the casserole and it is once again putted on the fire until the meat is done. Other versions is Mtsvadi with eggplant, fat, salt and pepper or only meat and onion, yet another version is to use only the softest meat of the animal or Mtsvadi made out of sheep meat, liver, spleen, sheep’s butt, onion, pomegranate or berberis, parsley and salt. Yet some other ways is to use battered meat, use wooden little sticks for the meat instead of iron ones. As one can see there is a great deal of variation to this dish.\(^{17}\)

![Fig 7. Mtsvadi over an open fire, the wood that is used is old wine stocks.©Söderlind, Ulrica, 2009.](image)

3.6 Sauces and spices

In the foreign category of cookbooks there is in total 47 recipes of sauces and spice mixes, the spice mixes are very hot ones with red pepper as a base and the most common sauce is the Tkhemali sauce followed by tomato sauce and sauces such as; different kind of satsivis, garlic sauces, pepper sauce (adjika), green adjika, coriander sauce, pomegranate sauce with walnuts, garlic and walnut sauce, walnut sauce, walnut and garlic paste, beet sauce, spinach sauce, cold herbed mayonnaise sauce and cornelian cherry sauce. In the Georgian cookbooks the total amount of sauces is far larger, as many as 132 and tkhemali is still in first place, followed by sauces such as tomato sauce and strong and hot mixes such as red dry adjika, adjika with nuts, green adjika, megrelian adjika and svanetian salt. Different kind of mayonnaises with or without herbs, with pickles, with egg and different kind of mustard sauces such as ordinary mustard sauce, medium mustard sauce and mustard with vinegar. In this books there is also sauces made out of dairy products such as milk and yogurt with different kind of flavors. Fruit and berry sauces are made out of pomegranates, apples, lemon, cherry or blackberry, undue grapes, grapes and plums. Yet another category of sauces in this books are warm ones such as stewed flour sauce, white sauce and stocks from different kind of animals such as beef and pigs.\(^{18}\) As one can see there is a great difference between the two categories of books, the Georgian ones has a lot more variation and range of the sauces then the other category.

\(^{16}\) Without author, 1993:200-254.


3.7 Bread

In the Georgian cookbooks there are six different kinds of bread represented and those are shoti, cornbread with cheese, Nazugi (the definition if this bread varies between the authors of the books. Some calls it spiced bread while others call it sweet yeast bread), millet bread and Qada (the shape looks like three ears), the total number of recipes are 18 and in the other category the total number of recipes is 19 but there are other kind of breads such as tone bread, Dedas puri (mothers bread), corn bread (Mchadi), lavashi as well as Nazurgi. Lavashi is thin bread that can be compared to Mexican tortilla bread or pita bread. 

Fig 9. Making of one of the most popular breads in Georgia, the so called Dedas Puri or in English “mothers bread” in a tone oven in the Racha region, Georgia. © Söderlind, Ulrica, 2010.
3.8 Dairy

In the foreign cookbooks the total amount of recipes in the dairy category is 47 and in the Georgian books 81, in both categories the dish Khachapuri is the most common one. Khachapuri is often translated as cheese bread. There are several variations of Khachapuri, depending on where one is in the country. One category of dishes that only can be found in the Georgian books are different kind of pancakes, such as normal pancakes, pancakes with jam, lemon or cream, while one only find milk from buffalo in the other category of books. Both categories of books also have the dish Achma that is often translated as cheese lasagna and one also find matsoni and different kind of yoghurts in both categories as well as the special Sulguni cheese that often is eaten grilled from a clay dish. In the category of meat dishes both categories of books had the ordinary Khinkali it is only the Georgian category that has a recipe with cheese khinkali. 

3.9 Birds

Graph 6 shows the numbers of bird dishes and the main ingredient in them in the two categories of cookbooks used in the study. As one can see chicken is by far the most popular bird to use as a main ingredient in the both categories, even as in the case of fish/shellfish and meat dishes the variation in numbers between the two categories is large. Dove, pheasant, quail and pigeon are the wildfowl’s that are used but to a very little extent. As for the previous categories of fish/shellfish and meat one also find dishes

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where the main ingredient is named only bird and that means one can use any bird that is at hand, other birds that are used as main ingredient is goose and turkey, even if goose is only found in the Georgian books.\(^{21}\)

Since chicken seems to be very popular it is worthy of a closer look into the dishes. Chicken is served as the following in the foreign books; chicken on a stick, fried, boiled or fried with garlic, with herbs, cold as appetizer, roasted in a pan, as a curry, as kebab with cheese, as a casserole with tomato sauce, fried or grilled with different kind of sauces such as tkhemali or walnut sauce. Other ways are to fry and serve only the wings or to stuff and grill the whole chicken, or serve them as rolettes and the liver is prepared and served with tarragon and sour cream. In the Georgian category one find chicken as the following; roasted, fried on a stick, fried and served with different attributes like walnuts, garlic, cheese, tomato, onions, coriander, green herbs, eggplant, plums, cornelian cherry, green beans, filled with raisins, served with onion or onion sauce, chicken served with rice, stewed with egg, served with different sauces such as wine sauce, walnut sauce, tkhemali sauce, sauce or juice from undone grapes.\(^{22}\)

Graph 6. Numbers of bird dishes and the main ingredient in them in the two categories of cookbooks used in the study.

![Graph showing numbers of bird dishes and the main ingredient in them in the two categories of cookbooks used in the study.](image)


3.10 Cereals, rice, pasta

In the category of cereals, rice and pasta the Georgian books has in total 97 recipes and the foreign books 40, it is more or less the same numbers as for the category of dairies. It is only in the Georgian books one finds recipes with pasta, such as; macaroni with cheese, macaroni in the oven, macaroni with tomato sauce, macaroni-spaghetti with egg and tomato sauce, macaroni- spaghetti baked in dough and noodles with eggplants. The most common dish in both categories of books are Ghomi, the dish can be described as a kind of porridge eaten with or without cheese and the dish is very filling in itself.23

Fig 11 and 12. Ghomi is a very filling dish on its own, especially when it is with cheese, however this dish is usually just one of the dishes on the table. Kolio is mainly made for religious events and on the photograph to the right one can see holy bread, candels and kolio in front of icons. © Söderlind, Ulrica, 2011.

Another favorite in the Georgian books is the dish named Mtshadi that is baked corn flour and the dish can be prepared in different ways such as stone baked, tone baked, oven baked or baked in a frying pan. In the sweet department one finds different kinds of porridges and risottos such as sweet rice, rice porridge with milk, porridge with raisins, cherry, cornelian cherry, almonds and black plums. Kolio and Korkoti are other sweet or semi sweet dishes in both categories of books. Korkoti is made out of wheat, honey and sugar powder and can be with or without walnuts and raisins; Kolio is made out of the same ingredients put with sugar instead of sugar powder. It is only in the foreign books one finds dishes like rice with lamb and pilafs with meat.24

3.11 Sweets, jam, desserts, preserves

The total amount of recipes in the foreign cookbooks for sweets and jams are 38 and for desserts 20, this category only has two recipes for preservations of foodstuffs; preserved cornelian cherry and preserved lady apples. The most popular sweet is Gozinaki (canded walnuts) and Pelamushi (grape juice and cornelian squares) followed by Churckhkela (walnut rolls). Something else that is popular is tklapi (sun dried fruit jam or sun dried grape juice), tklapi can either be sweet, semi sweet or sour, other sweets are bati-buti (pralines and honey tuffy). When it comes to deserts one finds dishes such ad different kind of cakes; hazelnut and honey cake, baklava, lemon tea cake, honey cake, apple-walnut cookies and Paska. The last cake is only made for Easter.\(^{25}\)

The picture in the Georgian books are a bit different from the one in the foreign books, in this category there is in total 60 when it comes to sweets and jams, 39 for desserts, 109 for sweet preserved (muraba) foodstuffs in liquid, 21 for dried preserved foodstuffs and 79 for pickles.\(^{26}\)

When it comes to sweet and jams the most popular dishes in the Georgian books are tklapi and Churckhkela, Felamushi (grape juice boiled with wheat flower), Falustaki (flour with honey roasted in a pan) are other popular sweets. Jam and jelly are made out of quince, white and yellow apple, cherry, lemon, melon, plums, mountain blackberry, big strawberry, cornelian cherry, apricot and peaches.\(^{27}\)

![Image 13](http://www.reaser.eu/image.png)


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The special cake for Easter Paska is the most popular one among desserts as far as it comes to cakes and buns in the Georgian books. Puddings seem to be a bit of a favorite as well in this books (there is no puddings at all in the other category of books), puddings are made out of or with; wine, whole apples, corn, cherry, rice, smetana, different kind of jams, plums, pears, lemon and oranges. Pies on the other hand are made out of walnut, raisin, curd, waffle, apples, different kind of fruits (the fruit is not specified in the recipes), plums and strawberry.28

When it comes to sweet preserves (Muraba) the most popular one in the books are cherry preserves (with or without pips) followed by preserved roses. A part from this two this kind of preserves are made out of; white cherry, raspberry, big strawberry, berberis, red and black currant, red bulbbery, black bulbbery, blackberry, quince, different kind of plums, peach, damson, cornelian cherry, different kind of apple, different kind of grapes, melon, apricots, pear, pumpkin, mandarin, lemon, orange, fig, eggplant, watermelon, walnut, red currant, tkhemali, carrots and cucumbers.29

A second way of preserving foodstuffs in this category of books in to dry them and it is different kinds of fruits and vegetables that are prepared this way such as; different kind of herbs, red and green tomatoes, eggplant, courgette, tkhemali, cornelian cherry, apples, pears, plums, peaches and grapes (becomes raisins). Some of these items are dried in sawdust.

![Fig 14 and 15. One way of preserving foodstuffs is to dry them. On the photograph to the left apples has been left to dry in the open air from a window to have for winter. The lady in the photograph to the right is preparing grapes to get dried into raisins. © Söderlind, Ulrica, 2007, 2009.](image)

A third way of preservation is to turn foodstuff into pickles and the most popular one in the Georgian books is pickled cucumber followed by pickled eggplants. A part from this two one finds pickles of; fresh corn, mushroom, different kind of beans, paprika, green and red tomatoes, berberis, celery, tarragon, flower cabbage, garlic, turnip, green pepper, leeks, cabbage, melon, cherry, cornelian cherry and grapes.30 It is very

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clear that in the Georgian books preservation of foodstuff is of more importance then in the other category of books.

Fig 16. Different kind of pickles in a market in the city of Rustavi, Georgia. © Söderlind, Ulrica, 2011.

3.12 Beverages

When it comes to beverages there is three recipes in the foreign books; wine, Turkish coffee and Matsoni (dairy product) for drinking. In the Georgian books the total amount of recipes is 18 and it is recipes for wine, different kind of vodkas (rose, peach, elderberry, mint and berry vodka) and different kind of juices such as; fresh grape juice, lemon juice with or without sugar, raspberry, currant, cherry, big strawberry, berberis, currant, melon and plum juices.31

Fig 17. After grape harvest and the pressing of the grapes the juice that will not be used for wine are boiled in order to make grape juice for drinking. © Jaramillo, Rubi, 2009.

4. Closing discussion

This paper has dealt with how the Georgian cuisine is described or depicted in 17 cookbooks, ten of the books are written in English and seven in Georgian. The cookbooks that are available in Russian regarding the Georgian cuisine has not been taken into account here, due to the authors poor knowledge of Russian. The overall question for the paper is if there is a difference between how Georgia’s cuisine is depicted in cookbooks written by Georgians and foreigners.

Graph 7 shows the different kind of food categories in percentages in the all the cookbooks used in the study.

Graph 7. The different kind of food categories in percentages in the cookbooks used in the study.

the most common basic foodstuff among vegetables is eggplants as also can be seen earlier in this text. Eggplants (Aubergine) is mainly fried and boiled and very often served with walnuts and/or walnut sauce and pomegranate seeds. Another very popular foodstuff is beans and peas, especially red beans. One of the favorite dishes with red beans among Georgians themselves is lobio and lobiani. To prepare lobio one lets the beans soak in water and change the water several times before the beans put on heat at get boiled, during the boiling salt, pepper and green chopped herbs are added. The seasoning of the beans is up to one’s own liking. The beans are served in clay pots with a lid of bread, preferably corn bread. Lobiani is mashed red beans with salt and pepper that are used to fill bread dough with and then fried in a frying pan, lobiani is also considered to be Georgian fast food. When one orders it from a food stands on the street it is made à la minute. It is not uncommon to find that this dish is explained as “bean bread” to foreigners.

Potatoes is often eaten in Georgia, mainly as fries or fried in a frying pan. The potatoes are of very high quality and are very tasty, it is a bit of a surprise that there is no more recipes with potatoes as the main ingredients in the cookbooks. Mashed potatoes with salt, pepper and sometimes with chopped yellow onion is also used to fill bread with. Even if minced meat is the ordinary filling of Khinkali there is also a version with mashed potatoes in it.

Pure salads stands for a little bit more than 2.5 percentage of the recipes in the books and the major part of them is vegetarian salads, and the most common one is tomato and cucumber salad. To be served a tomato and cucumber salad in the right season when the vegetables, especially the tomatoes are fully done is very tasteful. As for the salads vegetables are most common in the soup category as well and stand for almost 10 percentages of the recipes in the books.

Dishes with eggs as the main ingredient stands for 1.6 percentages of the recipes and it is a clear difference between the two category of books, in the foreign ones omelets are the most popular recipes while in the Georgian ones fried eggs with different kind of attributes the most popular ones.

Fishes and shellfish dishes stands for 6.5 percentage of the recipes and it is only in the Georgian books one finds recipes of shellfish, namely crab and that is also the only category where recipes of caviar with different flavors are found. It is the same for recipes with anchovy, barb, brill, cod, halibut and pike. In the foreign cookbooks the range of what kind of species of fishes that are used is limited to the following; catfish, salmon, Georgian gefüllte fish, grey mullet, sheat-fish, sturgeon and trout a part from the category that is only named as fish.

Dishes of meat stands for 18.3 percentages of the recipes and the most popular staple ingredients is by far beef, cow and veal (calf) and a very popular dish in both the categories of cookbooks is Mtsvadi that
comes in different shapes and forms. What is considered to be the original version can be described as pieces of meat on a skewer fried over an open fire, preferably with wood from cutted down old wine stocks.

Sauces and spices stand for 5 percentages of the recipes in the books and the most common one is different kinds of Tkhemali (prunus divaricata) sauces, made out of done or undone fruits. The Tkhemali fruit comes in different colours such as red, yellow and green. A part from Tkhemali, different kind of tomato sauces is also common in the books. Adjika is a popular hot strong pepper mix.

As for bread it stands for a bit over 1.5 percentages of the recipes in the books and that is surprising since bread or puri as it is called in Georgian is very essential to Georgians and if bread is missing on the table, it is considered to be not a full meal. The most common bread is tone bread and mothers’ bread. One explanation for the lack of recipes of bread can be that bread is so common that most of the people knows by heart how to make it, it has been passed down orally from generation to generation. Another explanation can be that bread is bought from the bakers and not made so often at home.

Dishes where dairy products are the main ingredients are somewhat higher then the bread category with 3.2 percentages. Cheese is very often made in the homes, especially in the countryside and cheese is eaten a lot at Georgian tables, the most common cheese is white soft cheese, not hard yellow one.

Achma is a dish that is popular in the cookbooks in this category, however it takes a very long time to make the dish and a minimum of two persons is needed. First dough is made that is left to rest for a while, the dough is cutted in small pieces and round balls are made that is once again left to rest. The balls are then rolled out with a rolling pin very thin, and putted into boiling salted water; each rolled out thin sheet is prepared this way. The boiled sheets are placed in a long pan and in between every layer of sheets cheese are placed; the pan should start and end with a sheet. The pan is then placed into the oven for baking. One can find that this dish is translated as “Cheese lasagna” when it is explained to foreigners.
Khachapuri is another dish that along with lobiani is considered to be Georgian fast food and is often translated into “cheese bread” for foreigners. The dish has different looks depending on where in the country you are but the main ingredients are the same; dough and cheese and then some use eggs as well. Khachapuri can be fried in a frying pan or in the oven, once again, depending on where you are in the country. The filling of ordinary Khinkali is minced meat but as have been mentioned earlier in the paper but beside meat Khinkali, there is also cheese Khinkali.

Birds stands for 9 percentage of all the recipes in the cookbooks and by far the most common bird used in the recipes is chicken and it seems like it is more common to use young chickens then a bit older ones, even if chicken in themselves are not old, if so they are called hens or roosters when they are used and served. One dish that is popular among the Georgians is chicken with or in garlic and mayonnaise sauce. Very few wild birds are used in the cookbooks that have been the objects for this study. However that does not make fully justice to this part of the Georgian cuisine since a lot of wild fowl is used, especially in the country side.
It is interesting to find that the recipes that are with pasta only can be found in the Georgian cookbooks and not in the foreign ones, and then it is recipes with macaronis and spaghetti. Here I can not help to wonder if the Georgian themselves consider Achma to be a pasta dish since it is found under the category of cheese and not under pasta dishes, I do not think they do. Therefore it does not seem correct to translate the dish into “cheese lasagna” since lasagna is made out of pasta. The dishes with rice, pasta and cereals as the main ingredients stand for almost seven percentages of the recipes in the study.

Sweets, jam, dessert and preserves stand for 10.5 percentages of the recipes in the cookbooks studied here and it is a clear difference between the two categories of books, it is only in the Georgian books one finds recipes for preserves in different forms, such as preserving foodstuffs by drying and different kinds of brines, sweet or sour. Interesting to find is that both categories of books has the cake Paska that is only made for Easter.

Fig 22. Paska is a cake that is only made for Easter along with the red eggs. © Söderlind, Ulrica, 2011.

The percentages (1.6) for beverage is the same as for egg dishes and it is surprising that there is not more recipes of beverages, specially in the foreign category of cookbooks since Georgia is well known and famous for its wine and the way wine is made. In Georgia the smaller wine farmers still are using the ancient fermenting technique of the grape juice after pressing. The kvevris (clay vessels for keeping the wine) are buried into the ground or cellar floor up to its neck and the grape juice is left to ferment under rigorous supervision with or without pips until the farmer consider it to be done before it is tapped to bottles. It is under debate but it seems more and more clear that Georgia can be called “the cradle of wine” since domesticated grape pips have been found that dates back to the calcolithic era. Wine is served to most meals, except to khinkali and Khachapuri. Lemonade is served very often at meal times and is of varying quality so it is surprising that no more recipes are found of lemonade, especially in the Georgian cookbooks.
It is a clear difference between the Georgian and foreign cookbooks how the countries cuisine is described and depicted, even if the category of Georgian cookbooks is fewer in comparison to the foreign ones but they are larger in size and pages. This might be explained with the fact that the Georgian cookbooks is written for Georgians in the first place and therefore contains a lot more recipes such as preservation of foodstuffs, it seems like preservations is not important at all in the other category of books. To me it seems like that if one only read the cookbooks that are aiming for the foreign public one gets a very limited knowledge, or only a small window or glimpse into the Georgian cuisine, especially if one only read the ones that are made for tourists and that does not make justice to the country’s cuisine with all its freshness and tastefulness.

The results of this study should not be seen as a definitive results and I do not claim it to be since there is always an opportunity that the results will be different if other books are studied. Regardless of that in my point of view I believe a study like this and its results show that cookbooks are a valuable choice as primary sources for food research. This category of books is seldom used in the research of food and beverage at least in Sweden, they are very step-motherly treated and I hope that this study can help to show the research value of them.

Since cookbooks is a product of its own time and society, I hope that this study have laid a foundation for further research in the field of food history in Georgia and that the study can be the starting point for further research with the focus on the socio-economy in which the different cookbooks was written and published, especially the ones written in Georgian.
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6. References: