



## Examining Traditional Winter Preparations: The Case of Bitlis Cuisine<sup>†</sup>

### Geleneksel Kış Hazırlıklarının İncelenmesi: Bitlis Mutfağı Örneği

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#### Abstract

Today, the term that corresponds to winter preparation is to ensure that the products produced in the season take place in human nutrition for a longer period of time due to their biological and physical structures. It is also a method of preservation. Considering the 81 provinces of Turkey's geography, it is thought that each region has its own winter preparations. This study aims to examine the winter preparations of Bitlis cuisine. In this direction, interviews were conducted with 13 female participants between 20-25 December 2021 using the semi-structured interview technique. As a result of the interviews, it was determined that the winter preparations were for drying, fermentation, and meat products. Among them, it has been determined that there are products such as sauerkraut called çorti, salted cabbage brine called şor leaf, dried meat, dried head and leg and dried fish, pressed cheese, which is kept in the soil and kept for five or six months to mellow. In addition, fruits and vegetables obtained from the temperate districts of the region are dried and stored.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Bitlis Cuisine, Winter Preparations, Traditional.

#### Öz

Günümüzde kış hazırlığı olarak karşılık bulan terim, mevsiminde üretilen ürünlerin biyolojik ve fiziksel yapıları gereği daha uzun süre insan beslenmesinde yer almasını sağlamaktır. Aynı zamanda bir muhafaza yöntemidir. Türkiye coğrafyasının 81 ili göz önüne alındığında her bir bölgenin kendine has kış hazırlıklarının olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu çalışmada da Bitlis mutfağına ait kış hazırlıklarının incelenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Bu doğrultuda yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme tekniği kullanılarak 20-25 Aralık 2021 tarihleri arasında 13 kadın katılımcı ile görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Yapılan görüşmeler sonucunda kış hazırlıklarının kurutma, fermantasyon ve et ürünlerine yönelik olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bunlar arasında çorti adı verilen lahana turşusu, şor yaprak adı verilen tuzlu lahana salamurası, toprağın içerisinde muhafaza edilen ve olgunlaşması için beş altı ay bekletilen basma peynir, kuru et, kelle paça kurutması, kuru balık gibi ürünlerin olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Ayrıca yörenin ılıman ilçelerinden temin edilen meyve ve sebzeler de kurutulularak saklanmaktadır.

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## Introduction

The term used as *mise en place* in kitchens is generally the preliminary preparation of the food before going to the customer. Although this process varies according to the product's structure, it can be the most laborious and perhaps the most difficult part of the kitchen, from the preparation of the knives used to the stock operations. What kind of effort is made in the background of the food that comes to the table is often not taken into account by the customer. The labor factor of *mise en place* in the meal prepared in a restaurant is similar to the labor in the preliminary preparation of the housewife. Often these two background labor forces are not taken into account. On the other hand, restaurant kitchens make their preliminary preparations every day of the year, while domestic preparations are usually made in certain periods as winter preparations.

Nutrition, which is the most basic need of human beings, is an action performed on a daily basis. The striking point here is that the nutrients vary seasonally, and the crops collected in the summer cannot be preserved until the winter months. However, these products can be consumed in winter with certain storage conditions. Food processing and storage methods differ according to food groups. Since the processing of foods will extend the life of foodstuffs, it is obtained by preserving the structure of basically organic materials or by changing them (Mil, 2018: 35). Different products in the food groups are stored by applying similar or different processing methods in accordance with their physical, chemical, or biological properties (Çaylak Dönmez & Pehlivan, 2019).

Today, the term that corresponds to winter preparation is to ensure that the products produced in the season take place in human nutrition for a longer period of time due to their biological and physical structures. It is also a method of preservation. The drying method, which is one of the methods included in the storage conditions, is among the oldest storage methods (Rahman & Perera, 2007). These include dry pepper, eggplant, tarhana (soup with dried yoghurt), bulgur (cracked wheat), spices, etc., which are consumed in winter. Pickles, which are available in almost every household, are obtained by a storage method called fermentation. In the past, freezing with snow and ice, and today refrigerators, is one of the most used storage methods. These storage methods have also been among the study subjects in the international literature. When these studies are examined; Prokopov and Tanchev (2004) to the techniques needed to preserve food for a long time, Guizani and Mothershaw (2007) to the reasons for the fermentation process to prevent the amount of wasted food, to the details and benefits of the drying methods of Rahman and Perera (2007), Rahman and Mothershaw (2007) It was seen that Velez Ruiz (2007) focused on the preservation of food by freezing, and Smid and Gorris (2007) included the effects of natural antimicrobials on food preservation.

Considering the 81 provinces of Turkey geography, it is thought that each region has its own winter preparations. When look at the national studies carried out in this context, it is understood that some studies are of a regional nature, and some studies are only product-oriented. When these studies are examined; the winter preparations of the Nevşehir region of Yolcu (2018), the winter preparations of the Erzurum region of Akoğul and Aksakallı Bayraktar (2020), the winter preparations of the Kütahya region of Baysan (2021), the winter preparations of the Gaziantep region of Çaylak Dönmez and Pehlivan (2019), it is seen that

Karagöz and Güllü (2018) researched the local products of Kırıkkale Bahşili region, and Seç and Kaya (2019) researched the food and winter preparations of Meskhetian Turks living in Konya, Karaman, and Osmaniye provinces. It has been determined that product-oriented studies have investigated the subject of jam and pickles by Güllü and Karagöz (2017), and the subject of tarhana by Yönel, Karagöz and Güllü (2018) and Başar, et al. (2019). This study was carried out to determine the winter preparations of Bitlis cuisine and to examine the production process. The study obtained data by interviewing 13 female participants between 20-25 December 2021 using the semi-structured interview technique.

## Method

### *Purpose and Importance of the Research*

The winter preparations, which are carried out intensively in the geography of Turkey, are implemented in almost all of the 81 provinces, and there are some differences. In addition, it has been determined from the studies mentioned above that the major cities in Turkey are discussed within the scope of winter preparations. This study aims to determine the winter preparations of Bitlis cuisine and examine the production process. For this purpose, the research question is determined as; What are the winter preparations made in traditional Bitlis cuisine and how are they produced? The study is important in bringing idiosyncratic winter preparations of the aforesaid region into the literature and recording them.

### *Data Collection Method*

To determine the winter preparations of the Bitlis city, semi-structured interview technique was preferred as the data collection method. In the semi-structured interview, it is aimed to get similar outputs from the participants. In this interview method, the questions to be asked to the participants are prepared in a comprehensive way, and the subject flow is provided to the researcher at the time of the interview. While preparing the interview form, the existing literature on the subject was examined in-depth, and the questions that were found to be missing in the field and wanted to be measured were included. Then, the expert opinion was consulted, who has studied on winter preparations and food storage methods. The final version of the form was created by making necessary changes in line with expert evaluations. The questions asked to the participants are given below;

1. What are the products/preparations made for the winter months in the Bitlis city? E.g.; tarhana (soup with dried yoghurt), bulgur (cracked wheat), dried products, frozen products, dairy products, canned food, etc.

2. Apart from the general winter preparations in Turkey, is there a special product belonging to Bitlis?

3. In which months does the preparation of these products start?

4. Where do you source the products for preparation?

5. In which areas do you prepare the products such as home kitchen, garden, village?

6. What are the points to be considered in the preparation of the products?

7. What are your methods of processing and storing the products?

8. What are the usage areas of the winter preparations? E.g.; soup, side dish, breakfast, etc.
9. Can you give a recipe including the month of winter preparation, the materials used, cooking, and storage method?

There are a number of features that the measurement tools used in the data collection process should have. If these are not suitable for the purpose of the study, the research findings will also cause errors at this point. The main objective is to ensure that these tools are valid and safe. It is a consistent measurement with a reliability measurement tool. The validity, on the other hand, is that the measurement tool focuses on and measures what or what it wants to measure, and does not add anything else (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). The interview questions given above show the study's validity in terms of focusing only on winter preparations. The fact that the interviewer introduces himself to the participants during the interview, the researcher conveys the purpose and scope of the study, and the findings obtained are consistent with the subject also shows its reliability. The sample of the study examined consists of 13 housewives over the age of 30 who live in the city of Bitlis and have knowledge about the production of traditional winter preparations of Bitlis cuisine. Purposive sampling was used to determine the housewife in question. Purposive sampling is when the researcher determines the sample by choosing from the universe in line with his/her own goal. While determining the sample, attention is paid to the selection of individuals who are most suitable for the research problem (Şimşek, 2018: 121). In this direction, a person who has been making winter preparations for many years and learned these preparations from his elders has been determined as the key person. Other participants were also reached with the snowball sampling method in line with the guidance of this person. In the snowball sampling method, the number of participants is increased by taking reference from people who have knowledge about the subject (Baş ve Akturan, 2013). Face-to-face interviews were held in Turkish with the people included in the research on 20-25 December 2021, and the interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants. The interviews lasted 5-10 minutes on average and were deciphered and interpreted. Additionally ethics committee approval was given for the study by Kastamonu University Rectorate Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee with the decision number 3/11.

### *Analysis of Data*

The findings that emerged within the scope of the research were written down through descriptive analysis. The resulting findings were interpreted within the framework of certain themes, especially demographic characteristics. As the confidentiality of the participants is in question within the scope of data analysis, the results obtained were transferred as P1, P2, P3-P13. The study's limitations are the primary and secondary sources and the participants who helped collect the data. The study was limited to 13 participants, considering that the saturation point was reached due to repeated responses. The saturation point indicates that sufficient findings for the purpose of the research have emerged (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2018). In addition, the fact that the data were obtained only from the participants living in Bitlis city center, indicates another limitation of the study.

### **Findings**

Women generally carry out the preparations made by the region for the winter months. When the demographic characteristics of the participants are examined, it is seen that those who are married in marital status, those who are 36-45 years old in age status, and those who are housewives in occupational group. Considering the educational status, it was determined that the majority of those at primary and high school levels were in the majority, and one person did not have any educational background. The answers given by the participants within the scope of the question of what are the products/preparations made for the winter months in the Bitlis are shown in Table 1.

Winter Preparations	
P 1	Dried zucchini, sauerkraut, dried beans, dried purple basil, pressed cheese (tulum cheese), dried pepper, gari (wild beet).
P 2	Pressed cheese, canned food (tomato, green pepper) for menemen, cucumber, pepper, cauliflower, pickled carrot, dried broad beans (green beans), çorti (sauerkraut), dried meat, salted fish, jağ (giant fennel), plum marmalade, dried tomatoes, dried pepper, gilgil ( <i>Panicum millaceum</i> ), Kurut (dairy product as cheese), pittim (wild pistachio).
P 3	Pressed cheese, pickled cheese, kurut, dried meat, soup, dried (zucchini, eggplant, pepper, apple, plum), sumac, jams (apple, strawberry, cherry, quince), breakfast sauce, canned food (tomato, green pepper) for menemen, pickled cucumber, canned (pepper, eggplant, okra, beans), dried broad beans (green beans), şor leaves/salty leaves (cabbage brine).
P 4	Çorti, fried meat, dried meat (eggplant, pepper), dried meat, bastik (cezerye), pressed cheese, knitted cheese, kurut, butter, pepper, tomato paste, dried broad beans (green beans).
P 5	Çorti, salted fish, dried herbs (purple basil, tomato, pepper, yellow zucchini), broad dried beans (green beans), canned food (tomato, green pepper) for menemen, butter, dried meat.
P 6	Pressed cheese, soup, broad dried beans, dried meat, dried fish, dried fruits (pear, quince), compote, breakfast sauce, canned for menemen, frozen fried pepper fries.
P 7	Tulum cheese/Pressed cheese, canned food (pepper, tomato, eggplant), soup, dried fruit (eggplant, pepper, tomato, purple basil, oregano), shijir (Kurut), jams (apricot, cherry), vinegar.
P 8	Cheese, dried, canned.
P 9	Çorti, dried meat, dried meats (green beans, peppers, eggplant, purple basil, parsley), dried sheep's head and foot, breakfast sauce, canned food (tomato, green pepper) for menemen, jağ, kenger ( <i>Gundelia tournefortii</i> ), kires (wild leek), pressed cheese.
P 10	Dried fruits (green beans, chili pepper, zucchini, eggplant, pepper, purple basil), plum marmalade, jams (peach, damson), pickled cheese, cucumber, pickled peppers, panicum millaceum, sumac, dried meat, çorti, pickled turnip leaves, canned food (tomato, green pepper) for menemen, canned tomato, potato, and eggplant embedding.
P 11	Dried meat, dried fruit-vegetables, cezerye, walnut sausage, dried broad beans (green beans), roasted peppers, roasted peppers, eggplant, butter, Pressed cheese/tulum cheese, pickled cheese.
P 12	Çorti, dried broad beans (green beans), dried meat, pickles, canned food (tomato, green pepper) for menemen, <i>Panicum millaceum</i> .
P 13	Pressed cheese, soup, dried (zucchini, eggplant, purple basil, mint, oregano), plum marmalade, pickled cucumber, canned food (tomato, green pepper) for menemen, salted fish, gari, jağ.

**Table 1:** Winter preparations of the Bitlis

In line with the answers given by the participants, it is possible to say that the city does not allow the cultivation of a wide variety of products in the region due to the intense winter conditions. The end of the winter season with May does not allow fruit and vegetable agriculture, especially grain production. Therefore, it is seen that the products prepared in the region and mentioned above by the participants are mostly based on fermentation and meat

products. The dried products are generally prepared using fruits and vegetables obtained from the temperate districts of the city. In line with the answers given, some products are called indispensable in the city of Bitlis, and that are specific to the region. These; sauerkraut called *çorti*, salty sauerkraut called *şor* leaf, pressed cheese, also known as tulum cheese, which is preserved in the soil and kept for five or six months to mellow, *şilor* paste, which means plum marmalade, dry meat, which is an indicator of intense meat consumption and a Central Asian habit, dried sheep's head and foot, fried meat, salt fish, dry fish, *keşk/şijir*, also known as *kurut*, obtained by drying buttermilk, in addition to the wheat tradition, *panicum millaceum*, which is one of the grains and derivatives, are products prepared before the winter season. Zucchini, beans, purple basil, oregano, sumac, wild beet (*gari*), giant fennel (*jağ*), *gundelia tournefortii* (*kenger*), wild pistachio (*pittim*), and wild leek (*kireş*), some of the region's important plants, are the foods frequently mentioned by the participants and consumed by some dried and some pickled. In addition, the pronunciations of the preparations in local dialects and their English equivalents are given in the Appendix. The classification of the winter preparations made by the participants according to the food groups is given in Table 2.

	Meat	Fruit	Vegetable-Herb	Dairy Pro.	Grain	
Winter Preparations	Dry meat	Plum marmalade	Zucchini drying	Dried broad beans	Pressed cheese	Panicum millaceum
	Salted fish	Dried apples	Sauerkraut	Giant fennel	Pickled cheese	
	Fried meat	Apple jam	Dried bean	Dry tomato	Knitted cheese	
	Dry fish	Strawberry jam	Dried purple basil	Wild pistachio	Kurut (Dairy product as cheese)	
	Dried sheep's head and foot	Quince jam	Dried pepper	Aubergine	Butter	
		Cherry jam	Cucumber	Cabbage brine		
		Dried pear	Pepper	Tomato paste		
		Dried quince	Cauliflower	Oregano		
		Peach jam	Pickled carrots	Gundelia tournefortii		
		Damson plum jam	Potatoes	Turnip		

**Table 2:** Classification of Winter Preparations According to Food Groups

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that the winter preparations are mainly made from the vegetable-herb group. Fruits, dairy and meat products follow respectively in terms of usage. Dried meat is an important product that has survived from Central Asian societies. These meats, which are available in most regions and are called *kakaç*, are also consumed in the city of Bitlis. The names used in the region are shaped as dry, salty, and roasted. The preservation method of these meats is quite simple and long-lasting. These meats, which are kneaded with plenty of salt, are stored by drying in harsh cold weather. Another important and ancient product of the city is *kurut* called *keşk/şijir*. *Kurut* is made from strained yogurt or yogurt churned in churn, the precipitate formed by boiling the buttermilk left after the butter is removed. Salt is added to them, given the desired shape, and dried in the sun. *Kurut*, which is high in protein and contains lactic bacteria formed during drying with a significant

amount of calcium, potassium, and phosphorus, is more nutritious than raw milk or yogurt (Isin, 2019: 94). Kurut, which has a cheesy odor and a sour taste, is added to the meals by being dissolved with water, its grated pieces are added to the noodles, or food is made with the ingredients added directly to the dry. Kurut, which was mentioned for the first time in the work of Kaşgarlı Mahmut in the 11th century, was used to mean dried milk (Kaşgarlı, 2018: c1, 357).

Participants start the products they prepare for the winter months with cheese in the spring and end with dried meat in the first weeks of December. Each of the raw products obtained from the village, garden, greengrocer, and the market has a season. The preparations that are started to be made during these seasons are primarily made in the home kitchen, but they are also prepared in the villages or home gardens. Our participants frequently mentioned the points to be considered for winter preparations as using clean and balanced products, preserving the color of the core, and paying attention to the season. The statements of the participants on this subject are as follows:

P1: For example, I am in favor of drying green beans. I lay the green beans in a clean environment in the living room in a clean environment so that it preserves the greenery so that it does not get sunlight, we dry it in a way that is not exposed to sunlight, and it stays green like that. We also dry purple basil, I also dry purple basil in a cleaner environment in a place that does not get sunlight. So that it retains its natural color.

P2: We attach great importance to hygiene. It should be washed well, it should not smell. It should be done as soon as possible not to get infected. It is necessary to pay attention to the season. For example, we need to dry the products well, when we make dried broad beans, we will dry them well to stay green. So are tomatoes, so are peppers. After drying, we dry it in a cool air place to not get mothballed. If it is in a cool and open place, it will not get worms. But in damp places, it gets worms right away.

P3: *"I pay attention to its cleanliness. It dries well and is clean. It is the salt, this is this, it should be put in a balanced way. For example, I add lemon salt to the pickle, I add chickpeas, I add vinegar, even two or three years are left for it not to spoil, nothing happens to the pickle."*

P6: *"We especially pay attention to our salt, and we take care of our vinegar. It has to be good, it has to be of good quality so that our products do not deteriorate."*

P7: Especially the product must be fresh and very good. You know, it has to be a quality product so that you can eat it deliciously in winter. It needs to be washed nicely. It needs to be filtered. For example, if we make canned food, we do it under canned conditions, we change the lids of the jars. You know, he has to hold those caps. We put what we put in the closet in bags, I put two bags, and I recommend it to everyone.

P11: *"So the place must be cool, it must be clean, it is the most important place we leave. It needs to be clean, the place needs to be cool so that it doesn't get mothballed."*

Within the scope of this study carried out in the Bitlis, it was determined by the participants that drying, fermentation, and heat treatments were used intensively. Winter preparations, which help prepare breakfasts, meals, side dishes, and appetizers, are frequently used in some important local dishes. These dishes of the city; katıklı dolma (stuffed winter squash with yoğurt), çorti taplaması (sauerkraut patty), ciğer taplama (liver patty), kabak dolması (stuffed zucchini) (P1), kış türlüsü (winter veggie stew), yumurtalı Jağ (giant fennel

with egg) (P2), çortı aşısı (sauerkraut soup) (P3), soğanlı köfte (meatball with onion) (P4), has dolma (stuffed cabbage) (P5), şalgam yemeği (turnip meal) (P9), keledoş (meat and wheat meal) (P10), gebol soup/ panicum millaceum soup (gebol çorbası/darı çorbası) (P12), kürt dolması (stuffed kurkish-white cabbage) (P13), ekşi dolma (sour stuffed) (P13) and ayran dolması (stuffed ayran) (P13). In the light of the information obtained from the participants, the recipes of some unique winter preparations of the city of Bitlis are given below.

**Gari (Wild beet):** Gari is a plant that emerges in the spring. We either dry it or put it in the freezer. It can also be stored in the freezer, but I prefer drying. If we put it in the freezer, we keep it in salty water with sumac overnight, take it out of the water the next day, rinse it again with clean water, and store it in the freezer like that. We take out and use the food whenever you want in winter and spring (P1).

**Şor Balık-Şor Fish (Salty Fish):** We have Erçiş fish, we keep it in salt for two days, after two days we press the bottom of the cans so that one layer of salt is one layer of fish, and we eat it for a whole winter. Like canned food, throw it into the water the night before or throw it into water 3 hours beforehand, wash it clean, flour it in oil and fry it. Bulgur (cracked wheat), pilaf is great on the side, with pickles (P2).

**Dry Meat:** *"We buy dried meat (from the butcher) in November. If you can find it already, we find and slaughter live animals. We salt them well, we open them and salt them so that the salt can go everywhere. It stays in the sun for a full week. We dry it well, then we cut it and keep it in a cool place, it's enough for us all winter. Especially hevir meat (goat meat under one-year-old) (P2)."*

**Şor Leaves/Salty Leaves (White cabbage leaves):** *"They salt the cabbage, put it in bins, and make the stuffing in the summer. They leave it for the summer (şor leaves). There is no cabbage in the summer, they salt it in the winter and put it in cans like pickled leaves, then in the summer, they boil it a little and make its stuffing. They call it a şill leaf (P3)."*

**Pressed Cheese/Tulum Cheese:** We bring the cheese in summer, we slice it, we salt it. We wash it clean, first, we salt it, it stays in saltwater for two days, then we take it out of the saltwater, add it to the strainer, filter it, press it again into the cans (pressing the cheese by hand as much as the can hold), in winter we take out a spoonful of cheese and eat it. We keep it like that for two or three, then add it to the ground. It stays until summer, and nothing happens in the soil. We take it out whenever we want, we take out another one when we're done. They call the name of the cheese baguette Pressed. Here, especially in Bitlis, they call it pressed cheese. Especially sheep cheese is preferred. We buy ready-made cheese and come and do it that way. It stays for a year, and nothing happens in the soil. If you don't have ten kinds of cottage cheese for breakfast in Bitlis, it's like nothing. We consume a lot of cheese. We will also water the soil where we put the cheese once a week to keep it moist. In order not to spoil in this hot summer. The brine is made from the remaining juice of the cheese. When we were kids, my mother used to put it in cubes, now there is no cube, we put it in plastic bins (P3).

**Dairy product as cheese (Kurut):** *"They shake the buttermilk, we roll it into balls and dry it, in the winter we take out its buttermilk and kurut, we say to it. We serve it on meals with gebol and stuffed with oil (P4)."*

**Fried meat:** I wash the meat well. The whole meat is washed, drained so that there is no water left in it. It's usually a small animal. We put the tail fat under the pot, it melts beautifully. Then we add the others. After adding it, you lay it in layers. Oil on the bottom,

others on top. It is cooked for 4-5 hours but on low heat. After cooking, we leave it in small small bowls and keep it in the refrigerator. It is served on meals, breakfast, and rice. When it is almost ready to cook, we add a little salt (P4).

Çorti (Sauerkraut): It was a ten-pound can, I bought fifteen kilos of cabbage, for example, there are houses that weigh fifty kilos. It is consumed a lot. Did you say winter preparation in Bitlis, I think first cheese, çorti. After that, I put my chickpeas on the bottom. I washed my beautiful cabbage, I chopped it, you cut it not so big, not too finely, but we chop it in the middle, then I put my cabbage, then I poured my rock salt in my basin, then I pressed it in my can. After that, I boiled the water and warmed it up a bit. I can't trust tap water because it's guaranteed like that. After that, I poured my water and put it next to the honeycomb because it should swell like this and vomit its water. You can't just take it and put it away. In a week like this, you vomit your water, you pour that water, I also pour saltwater into a container, into a can, as it decreases, I pour it as it decreases. Turn it off after a week and use it for meals. You can use it both in meals and you can eat it plain. In this way, a must-have çorti. I'm a little late, but it will be done in November for sure. (P7).

Driers: I collect peppers and eggplants from the garden, I wash them well, I carve them. I cut the caps off the peppers, string them on a string, and hang them on the balcony. I break the beans too. I lay it on a nice clean cloth and lay it on the balcony to dry it. I wash the chili peppers well first, then cut it in the middle and take out the core inside. Some pour salt lightly, some dry them as soon as possible, save them in sacks, then beat them. We have large logs, they are carved from walnut wood. We beat him by pouring salt like this and storing it in jars. She is wonderful (P10).

Jağ (Giant Fennel): *"We buy Jağ from the market, we boil it, it stays in the water for two or three days, and we change the water in the evening and morning. After that, we salt it, press the cans, and close the mouth. After that, we boil it, add eggs, cook it, and eat it. We do it in spring and in April (P13)".*

## Conclusion

Nutrition is a basic need for the continuity of human life. At the same time, it shapes the nutrition culture and enables the formation of storage methods for long-term use of foods. When we look at the storage methods in the historical process, salt and wood incense are the oldest known storage methods (Çalışır and Caliskan, 2003; Demirbilek and Girgin, 2019). In this study, it is aimed to determine the winter preparations of Bitlis cuisine and to examine the production process. In line with the purpose of the study, data were collected with 13 female participants by conducting semi-structured interviews between 20-25 December 2021.

As a result of the analysis, it was determined that the preparations for the winter in Bitlis started with cheese in the spring and ended with dry meat in the beginning of December. Yazgan Serinkaya (2017) similarly stated that the preparation of winter meals begins with the summer months. In addition, it is seen that winter preparations in the city are mostly based on fermentation and meat products. It has been determined that the dried products are generally prepared by means of fruits and vegetables obtained from the temperate districts of the city. In this context, pickle making and brine are often preferred. Baysan (2021) also found in his study that vegetables and fruits are mostly dried and stored. In addition, it is possible to say that dry meat is the winter preparation that attracts the most attention. Because among the common methods used for meat preservation, roasting or freezing methods are preferred.

In this context, products such as drying of head legs, roasting, salted fish and dried fish are also prepared.

Within the scope of winter preparations, it has been determined that especially dairy products are evaluated in different ways such as cheese and kurut, and cereal products are also preferred. Winter preparations are usually made in the home kitchen, but also in the villages or home gardens. Yolcu (2018) also stated in his study that winter preparations are made together in different environments among neighbors. While making the preparations, the use of clean and balanced products, the preservation of the essence color, and attention to the season were the issues that the participants paid the most attention. In addition, it has been determined that these preparations are frequently used in local dishes such as stuffed winter squash with yoğurt, meatballs with onions and turnips.

This study is important in terms of determining and recording the winter preparations of the Bitlis. It is also a contribution to the relevant literature. In future studies, recipes with ingredient quantities can be sought to establish the standard for the identified preparations. Differences can be examined by identifying similar winter preparations in the nearby region. In order not to forget the winter preparations determined/to be determined within the scope of the study and to ensure their sustainability, publications can be prepared by the relevant public institutions in printed and electronic media that can be easily accessed by both the local people and the tourists. Considering that these preparations are also included in applied folklore (Baysan, 2021), it can be contributed to the preservation of Turkish culinary culture by emphasizing that they are important in terms of keeping traditional culinary values alive.

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Name of food in local dialect	Name of food in English	Name of food in local dialect	Name of food in English
Basma/Tulum Peyniri	Pressed cheese	Lahana turşusu	Sauerkraut
Kış Türüsü	Winter Veggie Stew	Fasulye kurutması	Dried beans
Çorti	Sauerkraut	Reyhan kurutması	Dried purple basil
Kurut (şijir, keşk)	Dairy product as cheese	Kuru biber	Dried pepper
Gilgil	Panicum millaceum	Gari	Wild beet
Kabak kurutması	Dry zucchini	Menemenlik konservelikler	Canned food (tomato, green pepper) for menemen
Bakla kurutması (yeşil fasulye)	Dried broad beans (green beans)	Jağ	Giant fennel
Pıttım	Wild pistachio	Şor (lahana) yaprak (tuzlu yaprak)	White cabbage leaves (şor leaves/salty leaves)
Bastık (cezerye)	Cezerye (traditional Turkish dessert made from caramelised carrots, shredded coconut, and roasted walnuts, hazelnuts, or pistachios)	Örüklü peynir	Knitted cheese
Şilor (erik) salçası	Plum marmalade	Kelle paça kurutması	Dried sheep's head and foot
Kenger	Gundelia tournefortii	Kireş	Wild leek
Sumak	Sumac	Cevizli sucuk	Walnut sausage
Kavurma	Fried meat	Salamura peyniri	Pickled (Brined) cheese
Menemen	Eggs scrambled with tomatoes and green pepper	Kurut	Dairy product as cheese

**Appendix:** Name of Food in Local Dialect/English

**Ethics Committee Approval:** Ethics committee approval was obtained for this study with the decision of Kastamonu University Rectorate Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee dated 01.03.2022 and numbered 2022/11-3.