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"Cultures of Tarhana: A Tale of Humans and Microbes"

Sirakova, Sevgi Mutlu



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The cultures of tarhana—a fermented instant soup base—come with a long-practiced culinary tradition in the Middle East and the Balkans. Although often dubbed the "poor man's soup," tarhana is much more than just a soup; it is a fermented staple that has preserved and transmitted

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distinct flavours, culinary skills, and cultural heritages across generations. While conducting ethnographic research on fermentation practices in Bulgaria and Turkey, I've learnt to appreciate the prevalence and diversity of tarhana traditions. I began to see that "cultures" of tarhana encompass not only live fermentation starters, where microbes play a specific role, but also the rich traditions and practices surrounding this staple. (From the article)

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