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“Cultures of Tarhana: A Tale of Humans and Microbes”

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Sirakova, Sevgi Mutlu. “Cultures of Tarhana: A Tale of Humans and Microbes.” *Springs: The Rachel Carson Center Review*, no. 6 (October 2024).

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

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)

This article was originally published in *Springs: The Rachel Carson Center Review*. *Springs* is an online publication featuring peer-reviewed articles, creative nonfiction, and artistic contributions that showcase the work of the Rachel Carson Center and its community across the world.

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