

# Forgotten legacy: an endeavor to highlight heritage food of Egyptian Bedouins

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## ABSTRACT

Despite the issue of food heritage having an important debate around the globe, there is still inconclusive literature addressing Egyptian heritage food in general, and particularly the gastronomic heritage of Egyptian Bedouins. The main argument of the current study is firstly to identify a set of genuine heritage foods of Egyptian Bedouins by using explicit criteria. Then, transfer the data to develop a documented recipe book for these meals, which is intended to be an initial phase of promoting them as a unique component of the Egyptian cultural legacy. The target population of the study is the Egyptian Bedouin society, both in the western and eastern deserts. Through a qualitative approach, 15 semi-structured interviews with elderly local people were undertaken before conducting a focus group with six Bedouin experts. The findings section reported eight heritage foods of Egyptian Bedouins and produced a recipe book for them.

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## Introduction

The 1980s marked a turning point towards the expansion of empirical and theoretical scientific efforts concentrating on food originating from a diversity of social and cultural perspectives (Warde, 2016; Becuț & Puerto, 2017). Following in the gradual evolution of the growing global concern in the food of our present societies, the attention paid to food and eating by social sciences has recently been transferred from undertaking the issue as an area of interest to discussing it as a concern constructed as a research topic (Becuț & Puerto, 2017). As for the debate on food heritage, it dates back to the 1990s, when the focus was on Europe and North America. In 1992, the EU established a system related to the Protected Designation of Origin, an institute that notarized the inclusion of the origin place of several food products (Choi & Kim, 2015).

One of the efforts to preserve this highly valued gastronomic heritage as unique legacies is to explore, determine, and document them in appropriate categories and functions (Ardriyati & Wiwaha, 2016). Besides, investigating the history of a product may be useful for the purpose of marketing and health wellness (Asensio et al, 2008). Hence, several researchers clarified broadly food heritage as the discipline relating to a specific agricultural territory and the origin of food as a featured product of the local community (Ramli et al, 2016).

The concept of gastronomy has had a deep relationship with heritage, especially under the effect of the mass culinary media that created the mainstream consciousness (Hwang et al, 2005). For food, as for other consumer goods, there are two main claims in the debate of its role in cultural systems (Crang, 1996). The first claim confirms the international homogenization of patterns of consumption, marketing and trade – e.g. the process of *Coca-Colafication* or *McDonaldization* (Hughes, 1995). The second claim leads to paying attention to the local products that feature every region (Miller, 1987).

Food is a defining merit in every culture. Despite its central mission of sustaining life, it directly affects the society, culture, and heritage in every territory around the globe in numerous observed and hidden ways, including the arts and stories of each region (Highfield, 2017). Food also fits well into several heritage definitions, involving the long renowned cultural tradition of the hospitality sector, or the fine craftsmanship of specific types of traditional foods (Mac Con Iomaire, 2018). However, food heritage is also an area of conflict, it has

been clarified that the feelings to local food and other products are a result of the mass movement of fast food into homes and restaurants. (Gracia & Contreras, 2005; Poulain, 2002).

The term "Bedouin" comes from the Arabic Badiya (desert), referring to desert dweller or pastoral nomad, a way of life traditionally linked to pastoral herders who resided in the desert in tent dwellings constructed of goat-hair (Layne, 1994; Gregoricka & Judd, 2015). The Bedouins live in different regions within Egypt, precisely in the coastal zone of the western desert and Sinai, in the eastern desert (Alary et al, 2016). The current study seeks to document a set of heritage food of Egyptian Bedouins.

Although a considerable number of authentic foods and diversity of cooking styles and techniques have been available around the world, today most of them are disappearing because of the 'modernization' of dietary modalities (Adikari & Lakmali, 2016). Furthermore, The Malaysian experience confirms that food is a significant antecedent in attracting international tourists for their traveling objective to the destination (Omar et al, 2015). Likewise, touristic destinations around the world, such as Indonesia and Sri Lanka, have depended on heritage food marketing as a competitive advantage.

Despite food heritage being the focus of many debates around the globe, there is still inconclusive literature addressing Egyptian food heritage in general, and particularly the heritage food of Egyptian Bedouins. Accordingly, there is very little information available on the food culture of Egyptian Bedouins. It is necessary to document these treasures so as not to lose them due to modern trends that may replace the traditional ones.

The focus of the current research is first to explore a set of genuine heritage foods of Egyptian Bedouins, then develop a documented recipe book for these dishes. The importance of filling such a scientific gap is the need to attempt to conserve the cultural legacy of Bedouins and shed light on their identity. The aforementioned argument comes in line with several authors who addressed the relationship between heritage food and feelings of belonging in local communities (Parsa, 1998; Burstedt, 2003; Tellström et al, 2006; Caputo, 2011; Santich, 2012; Becuț & Puerto, 2017). In addition, there are social, political, and economic benefits that might be generated by the significant exploitation of this inheritance (Hughes, 1995; Ardriyati & Wiwaha, 2016).

To undertake such research, we firstly

## **“IN MANY MULTI-CULTURAL COUNTRIES, IT IS IMPORTANT, ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF TRADITION AND AUTHENTICITY, TO HAVE A COMMONLY ACCEPTED FOOD IDENTITY TO REPRESENT THE IMAGE OF A NATION. IN ADDITION, PEOPLE ARE EXPERIENCING EXTERNAL PRESSURES ON THEIR CULTURE AND TRADITION”**

performed a desk study, gathering studies related to the perspective of gastronomic heritage, to build a structured theoretical framework of reference and identify the most convenient methodology. As for the field study, we reviewed the demography of Egypt to recognize the most known territories of the Bedouin presence and also communicated with trusted local coordinators to facilitate the process of raw data collection. The data collection phase included three steps: 1) creation of the criteria to be followed while determining heritage foods; 2) execution of semi-structured interviews with aged Bedouins to collect the heritage foods information; and 3) conducting focus group discussion with Bedouin experts for more validation of the data gathered in step two.

The paper is structured into four sections. The first one describes the theoretical framework of reference. While the second section explains the research design, the third one illustrates the findings obtained so far. The last section offers some concluding remarks and insights for future research developments.

### **Theoretical framework**

#### ***Heritage food concept***

The Oxford English Dictionary states that the word “heritage” derives from the Old French *heritage*, from *hériter* “legacies” and defines it in different ways as property that is or may be inherited; an inheritance, valued objects and qualities such as historic buildings and cultural rituals that have been passed down from earlier generations, indicating or relating to things of distinct architectural, historical, or natural value, conserved for the nation and denoting a traditional brand or product marked as symbolic of fine craftsmanship, as well as a breed of livestock or poultry that was once traditional to an area but is no longer produced in large numbers (Mac Con Lomaire, 2018).

Moreover, the UNESCO Convention on Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) defined intangible cultural

heritage as “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage” (Viriaere & Miller, 2018). With regard to food, although it deals with tangible and consumable materials, the style and manner of consumption remain a part of the intangible culture (Mac Con Lomaire, 2018).

“As a heritage, food does not only come from places, organically growing out of them but also makes places as symbolic destinations, being deployed in the construction of various imaginative geographies” (Cook & Crang, 1996, p. 140). In other words, the concept of heritage not only includes the demarcating social features of food but also introduces new claims of contemporary beliefs, cultural structure, as well as political and economic advantages (Matta, 2016). Bessièrè & Tibèrè (2010) defined food heritage as

*a set of material and immaterial elements of food cultures, which have been considered as a shared legacy or a common product. This food heritage includes agricultural products, ingredients, dishes, techniques, recipes and food traditions. It includes table manners, the symbolic dimension of food and in its more material aspects, cooking artifacts and the table setting: utensils, dishware, etc. (cited in Matta, 2013, p. 2).*

Instead, Wahid et al (2009) classified heritage foods into two categories. The first category refers to common foods that are part of our daily life; whereas the second includes foods that face the risk of extinction. More exactly, they were once part of our culture, but are slowly disappearing (Ramli et al, 2016). The current study focuses on the second category.

Based on an interdisciplinary point of view, Abdulmawla et al, (2018) argued that the concept “food heritage” is different and more comprehensive than the concept “heritage food”. They built their claim on various definitions of food heritage, which reported that food is a material component of the large process

of food heritage, besides other immaterial elements (Bessi re, 1998; Ishak et al, 2013; Graham et al, 2016). Thus, it is necessary to distinguish between the two concepts before starting in studies in this field.

### ***Heritage food and human identity***

Food and meals are a central field in cultural interaction. Otherwise, ethnologists (e.g. K stlin, 1975; Salomonsson, 1984) highlighted the economic and political utilization of heritage food as part of a process that reinvigorates the belonging feelings to local identity (Tellstr m et al, 2006). The belief that food -what and how humans eat- is a fundamental of national identity and hardly new (Santich, 2012). The phrase "Tell me what you eat and I'll tell you who you are" is often quoted to demonstrate that food -a basic common physiological necessity for all sentient beings- is also used to expose the singular identity of an individual and the remarkable identity of a social group (Becu  & Puerto, 2017).

Food is also used as a marker for identity regardless of geographical, social and political differences featuring the populations (Ramli et al, 2016). In other words, without a shared identity, a nation will have a vague and incompatible identity due to a lack of agreement which creates an adverse image and impacts the social integration of a country (Ramil et al., 2016, cited from Lin et al, 2011).

People's habits related to food, including procurement, preparation, cooking, preservation, and consumption are often passed on from one generation to another as holy texts and family traditions, consequently, ethnic groups take more pride in the preservation of their food habits that holds them together (Parsa, 1998). As food heritage becomes a valuable legacy, there is a prominent concern and attention being given to the conservation of traditional cuisine since it is closely related to the ingredients, production method, dishes, and eating habits. This conservation of cultural heritage is difficult, as it is associated with values, beliefs, behaviors, and rules of the society (Ramli et al, 2016).

Salomonsson (2003) proposed that food can serve as a highlighter of many contrastive identities. In so doing, the labeling of food with texts and pictures offers a symbolic domain that is linked with meaning, where issues of difference and categorization, belonging and pride are discussed (Salomonsson, 2003). As the history of humanity is above all, the movements of cuisines and food products have

generated transformative processes affecting local cultures, consumer expectations, economic and political developments (Becu  & Puerto, 2017).

In many multi-cultural countries, it is important, especially in terms of tradition and authenticity, to have a commonly accepted food identity to represent the image of a nation (Ramli et al, 2016). In addition, people are experiencing external pressures on their culture and tradition, including the threat of missing their food heritage or identity due to the rise in population, massive development, and new styles of consumerism in many parts of the globe (Ramli et al, 2016). Hence, academia has paid prominent attention to the issues of authentic and heritage food to sustain them, and it seems like everybody is worried about this issue (Hamzah et al, 2015).

Occidental cities offer a diversity of Chinese, Italian, Russian, Greek, Indian, Thai and Mexican restaurants, this disclaims the notion that globalization and supranational politics will lead to the neutralization of diversity of food culture (Burstedt, 2003). When the national or regional origin of a specific food is defined, the dish or the meal appears as a unique alternative (Burstedt, 2003). Within the small social units, food habits play an essential role in the individual and familial interactions, and in the creation and sustaining of socio-cultural identities (de Solier & Duruz, 2013). Additionally, our food preferences and its related habits usually attach to our culture and disclose our identity (Savarin, 2009).

Food is so vital to the everyday reproduction of culture that when groups travel, they carry their food legacies with them into new host nations (Hage, 1997). Across societies, food habits are essential as the food itself because they often indicate familiarity, shared legacy, and belonging feelings of a specific social group (Collins, 2008). The food preferences, preparation, presentation and preservation practices, the use of utensils, seating arrangements, and eating manners, all reinforce social bonds and reproduce aspects of culture (Simmel, 1997; Bessi re & Tib re, 2010). Furthermore, food heritage has been used globally as a typical factor in the convergence of taste, hence, it can be marked as one of the ideal identities, identification and nation-building tools in a country. (Tibere & Aloysius, 2013).

## ***The global concern of heritage food***

Historiographies have remarkably clarified how gastronomic heritage represents the common interest in all human cultures for historical continuity and conservation of a shared sense of community membership (Poulain, 2002). Meanwhile, research around the heritagization of food has been expanding globally ever since which reflects the growing number of recent issues and practices towards the globalization of food (Sammells, 2014). Abdulmawla et al. (2018), investigated 30 scientific works from four disciplines in the perspective of heritage food and found out that 24 countries around the world have been mentioned in the reviewed works, which reveals the great attention paid to the issue.

Moreover, "UNESCO encourages communities to identify, document, protect, promote and revitalize such heritage since it can be vulnerable to the effects of globalization, social transformation, and intolerance" (Mac Con lomaire, 2018, p.4). As a result, between 2001 and 2005, UNESCO declared 90 Masterworks followed by the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008 (Mac Con lomaire, 2018). The first inclusion by UNESCO of food on its list was in 2010 (France, Croatia, Mexico), hence, there has been a growth of efforts by various nations concerning their food and beverage legacy (Mac Con lomaire, 2018). Mexican gastronomy became the first cuisine to be classified as an intangible cultural heritage by UNESCO in 2010 (Littaye, 2015).

So far, seven themes of city-industry are earmarked under the UNESCO named city of literature, city of music, city of crafts and folk art, city of design, city of media arts, and city of gastronomy. To date, 25 cities around the world have been labeled as "City of Gastronomy", namely, Popayan and Buenaventura in Colombia; Östersund in Sweden; Shunde, Macao, and Chengdu in China; Gaziantep and Hatay in Turkey;

Jeonju in South Korea; Rasht in Iran; Tsuruoka in Japan; Tucson and San Antonio in the USA; Parma and Alba in Italy; Zahlé in Lebanon; Cochabamba in Bolivia; Belém, Florianopolis, and Paraty in Brazil; Panama city; Denia and Burgos in Spain; Ensenada in Mexico; Phuket in Thailand, and Bergen in Norway (UNESCO, 2019).

Furthermore, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) declared that culinary heritage is emphasized as one of the leading segments in the cultural tourism global business, thus, governments should sustain their competitiveness of food by adopting well-planned strategies to promote the sustainability of their food heritage as a cultural tourism product (Ramli et al, 2016). Otherwise, there has been a rapid growing in the number of traditional or heritage foods and drinks seeking Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) or Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) according to the European Union (EU, 2015).

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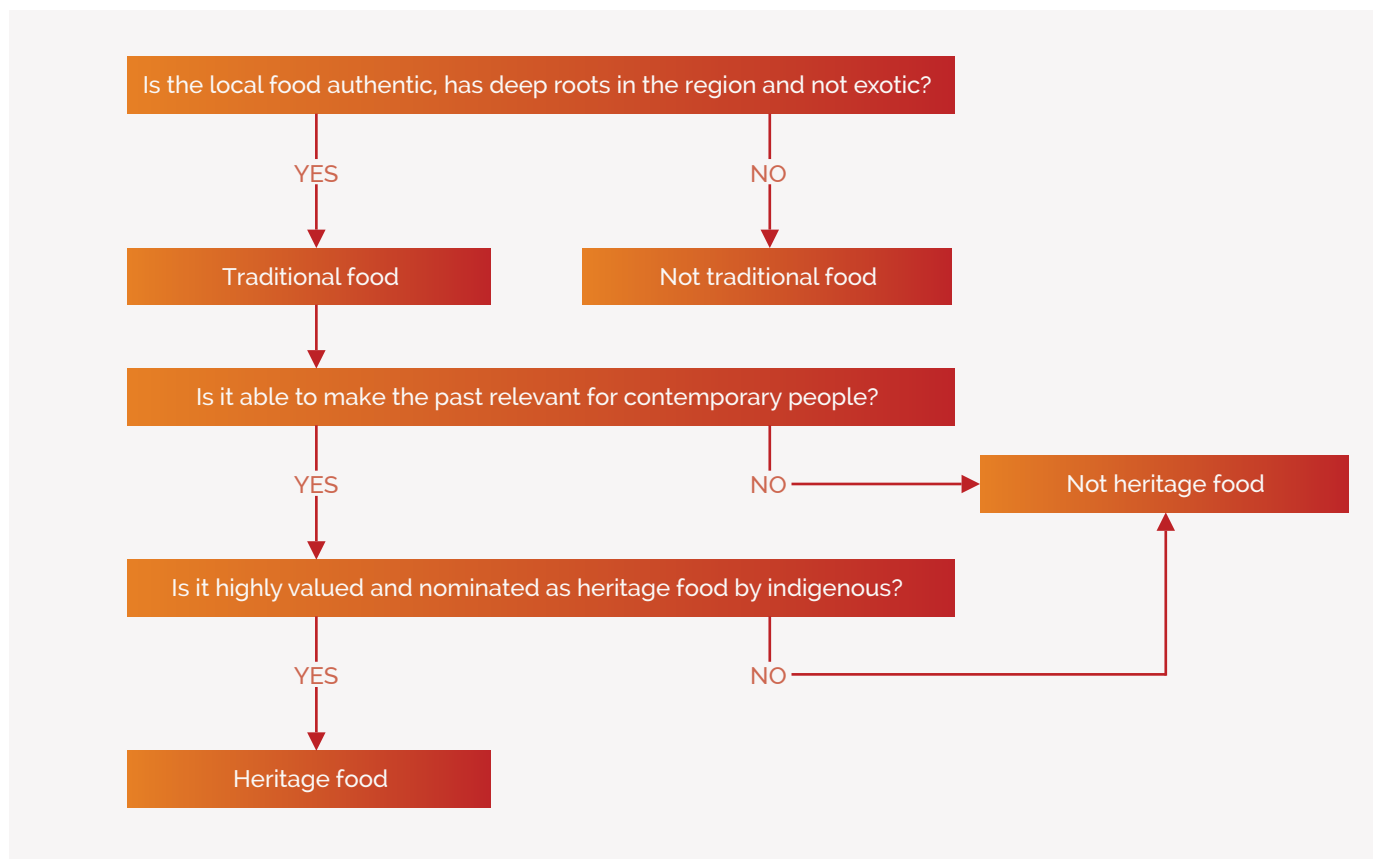
### **Methodology**

#### ***Identifying heritage food***

Radzi et al, (2010) argued that food heritage research should cover the basic principles of food intake, ingredients in food, cooking techniques, food and cultures, and meals, which current research will try to adopt. However, firstly the concept of "heritage food" needs to be identified, as well as through which criteria we can determine whether a type of food may be considered as heritage or not.

Indeed, several authors proposed that heritage food is defined as traditional food (Abdulmawla et al, 2018), while others have used the concept "local food" to refer to "heritage food" (Tellström et al, 2006; Littaye, 2015). Reviewing literature, it is evident that authors frequently repeat three words (local, traditional, heritage) to express the same concept, so much that Bessière (1998) in his pioneer study used the three terms in the same title "Local Development and Heritage: Traditional Food and Cuisine as Tourist





**FIGURE 1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL, TRADITIONAL, AND HERITAGE FOOD**

Source: Abdulmawla et al (2018).

Attractions in Rural Areas”, reflecting the high interlock between the three concepts.

In contrast, the fact that local or traditional foods had deeper roots, did not automatically lead to their gaining higher priorities of protection (Gugerell, 2017). In addition, heritage is the part of traditions that is highly valued and acclaimed as heritage by the community, and at the same time, it must be able to make the past relevant for contemporary people (Aaltonen et al, 2015). Also, as already argued in a previous study (Abdulmawla et al, 2018), it cannot be asserted that all local traditional foods be considered heritage food and hence a diagram was suggested to formulate the relationship between the three concepts, based on a systematic review of 30 scientific works upon the literature of the last 20 years. This diagram (figure 1) has been used in the first step of the methodology of the current study to help us in deciding whether our collected field data of Egyptian Bedouin food could be true heritage food or not.

After identifying the heritage foods of the Bedouins using the diagram above, we began to collect the required data to formulate the recipe book of those dishes. The methods of data acquisition are detailed in the following section.

### ***Sampling and data collection instruments***

The target population of the study was the Egyptian Bedouin society. It is well-known that people who have Bedouin roots are now living in most of the Egyptian governorates, especially after their immigration from the desert to the city for better opportunities. Moreover, people who continue the nomadic lifestyle live in three major regions in Egypt: the western desert, the eastern desert (north and south Sinai), and the north coast of the western desert. Hence, the study focused on heritage food of these areas, precisely the regions of Sinai, Matruh, and Siwa.

Regarding the determination of dishes under investigation, an initial online survey was conducted, targeted in more than 1,000 Egyptian Bedouins on Facebook groups, which are specialized in Bedouin affairs. The survey aimed to define the most renowned foods in Bedouin heritage, as well as reach out to the expected qualified participants in the upcoming steps. We also contacted representatives of the union of Arab tribes in Egypt – a non-commercial organization – to provide us with names of experts who could serve as sources of our field data. The results of the initial survey produced 12 Bedouin dishes supposed to be heritage,

namely: *Mebakkbaka* (*Macrona jaria*), *Mashwy Hofra*, *Qadied* (Dry Meat), *Gerisha*, *Assida*, *Tannour Bread*, *Sagg Bread*, *Qarasa Bread*, Bedouin sparrow soup, Bedouin rice with liver and nuts, Bedouin *Kishk*, and *Harira*. Hence, the study highlighted those 12 dishes as its sample.

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect data about the heritage food of Egyptian Bedouins. The instruments used are common in cultural and ethnographical studies because they allow, on the one hand, the exchange and correction of ideas among the participants, as well as between the participants and the researcher. As described by Adikari & Lakmali (2016), the fieldwork targeted people who have had the experience and are concerned with Bedouin affairs in general and particularly, the Bedouin food. Based on the results of the initial survey and contact with the Bedouin organization mentioned above, 15 semi-structured interviews with elderly local people were undertaken before transmitting the information to the focus group of six Bedouin experts (two participants from each region) under one Bedouin coordinator. Conducting both interviews and the focus group was done to ensure the consistency and validity of the collected data from different sources.

A guide consisting of three parts to be applied during data acquisition was elaborated. Part one included the profile of participants: (name, age, region, and contact) to verify the factors of being older and belonging to "*Badyia*". Part two is consistent with the first concern of the research: determining a set of genuine heritage foods of Egyptian Bedouins, and including the three dichotomies questions suggested by Abdulmawla et al (2018), in addition to dish name: (what is/are the name/s of the local food?; is the local food authentic, not exotic, and does it have deep roots in the region?; is it able to make the past relevant for contemporary people?; and is it highly valued and nominated as heritage food?. Part three consisted of a group of open-ended questions used to collect primary data about heritage foods as pictures, ingredients, preparation methods, and periods of use around the year. The latter part was established to fit into the second topic of the research – developing a documented recipe book for these dishes, the criteria agreed with the claim of Salomonsson (2003) regarding cultural studies.

## Data presentation

During the documentation, profiles of heritage foods were given in their original names and pictures with a complete description of each type of food concerning production methods from the raw ingredients to the final products. Besides, Bedouin areas that are famous for using each type of typical food were also mentioned. The data were arranged according to the food category (meals, desserts, and bread) in a table.

## Findings

Table 1 shows the recipes studied after the careful selection of eight heritage foods. The table includes dish name/s, most reflective pictures of the dish, brief description of the nature of food and Bedouin areas associated with it, dish ingredients, and standard preparation methods as well as steps of cooking.

It was observed that Bedouins ordinarily cook many types of raw foods in the same dish and then serve them as a complete meal. Furthermore, they use primitive tools such as wooden hands, tree branches, tin barrels, tin pots, clay furnaces, and cloth pieces in preparing their food which reflects the nomadic lifestyle. Cooking methods are usually baking using coal and sand, as well as burying food in a hot hole. Quantities of ingredients often standardized using spoons and cups. Herbs and spices are always used in quantities as desired.

In spite of the notable effect of immigration, media, and social movement, Egyptian Bedouins still prepare, eat, and are proud of their heritage food and cultural legacy. Such feelings of belonging lead them to be more informed about different aspects of their food heritage, which in turn made the process of determining of heritage foods much easier for us. With better-formulated words, once a traditional meal was mentioned, the Bedouins started to recount all the details about it including their consensus or not that the food has or does not have Bedouin roots. That situation enabled us to ensure carefully the validity of our data regarding the eight heritage recipes.

As for the social aspects of the documented recipes, the participants confirmed the relationship between the nature of the occasion and the kind of food cooked. For instance, they cook *Mebakkbaka* (*Macrona jaria*) as a meal and *Asida* or *Gerisha* as a


dessert at happy events such as: (weddings, having a baby, or accomplishing a business deal, etc). On these occasions, usually, four or five people are invited to share the same tray while eating. Otherwise, the

different types of goat and sheep meat dishes are often costly for families, especially when using a whole animal in preparing *Mashwy Hofra* (*Mashwy Shawirma*) and sometimes *Qadied*. Therefore, preparing these

Food name and pictures	Description	Ingredients	Preparation method
<p><i>Mebakkbaka</i> (<i>Macrona jaria</i>)</p> 	<p>The most popular Bedouin meal in all Egyptian nomadic areas. Especially in the western desert and north coastal regions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 500 gm meat or skin-free chicken</li> <li>• 500 gm medium size Macaroni</li> <li>• Two onions</li> <li>• Three garlic cloves</li> <li>• Corn oil</li> <li>• Four tomatoes</li> <li>• Two tablespoons tomato paste</li> <li>• Salt</li> <li>• Black pepper</li> <li>• Turmeric</li> <li>• Coriander</li> <li>• Hot green pepper</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put the pot on the stove and then add about seven tablespoons of oil.</li> <li>• Add the grated onions in the hot oil until browned.</li> <li>• Add meat, stirring well.</li> <li>• Stir in the mashed tomatoes and two tablespoons of sauce.</li> <li>• Add all spices and green pepper.</li> <li>• After stewing, add the water and leave it for 15 minutes.</li> <li>• Add the pasta and reduce heat until cooked.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Mashwy Hofra</i> (<i>Mashwy Shawirma</i>)</p> 	<p>This method is common in the <i>Siwa</i> oasis. Therefore, many hotels usually ask <i>Siwa</i> people to prepare it for tourists in the hotel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A whole sheep or goat</li> <li>• Potatoes</li> <li>• Onions</li> <li>• Tomatoes</li> <li>• Lemon</li> <li>• Green pepper</li> <li>• Salt</li> <li>• Spices</li> <li>• Butter</li> <li>• Garlic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stuff the sheep with onions, potatoes, tomatoes, lemon, pepper, spices, and garlic.</li> <li>• Make a hole of 1m × 1m and 30 cm depth and put the glowing coal inside.</li> <li>• Place the sheep above the fire using a tree branch.</li> <li>• Spread butter on the meat occasionally to avoid burning the meat on the outside.</li> <li>• Wait until done and serve alone or with rice.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Qadied</i> (<i>Dry Meat</i>)</p> 	<p>One of the most important and oldest traditional dishes in Matruh, Alexandria <i>Badiya</i>, and Oases. It is preferred during the month of "<i>Ramadan</i>" fasting because of its flavor and healthy qualities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sheep or goat meat</li> <li>• Salt</li> <li>• Coriander</li> <li>• Black pepper</li> <li>• Hot sauce</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Place the meat and all the spices and leave it for four hours in the seasoning.</li> <li>• Put a rope in a place exposed to sun and air. Then spread the meat on it like hanging clothes.</li> <li>• After 15 days collect meat and keep it at home or in the fridge.</li> <li>• Cook the meat with your favorite preparation methods.</li> </ul>



Food name and pictures	Description	Ingredients	Preparation method
<p><i>Gerisha</i></p> 	<p>One of the most used heritage meals in North Sinai and South Sinai <i>Badiya</i>, Ismailia, and <i>Suez</i> gulf. A permanent component on the tables of the Bedouins of Eastern Egypt especially during "<i>Ramadan</i>" and happy celebrations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole grain wheat</li> <li>• A small onion</li> <li>• Olive oil</li> <li>• Salt</li> <li>• Spices</li> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Butter</li> <li>• A small portion of meat or skin-free chicken cubes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put three tablespoons of olive oil in a pan and then add the grated onions to the hot oil.</li> <li>• Add two large cups of soaked wheat.</li> <li>• Stir in three cups of chicken or meat broth as well as salt and spices.</li> <li>• Add a few pieces of boiled meat or chicken and stir constantly.</li> <li>• Ten minutes before ready, add butter mixed with milk and stir with a wooden spoon constantly.</li> <li>• Serve hot.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Assida</i></p> 	<p>A famous heritage dessert in the ancient and Egyptian <i>Badiya</i>. Usually eaten as breakfast in winter because it provides the body with energy and essential nutrients as well as providing warmth.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soft flour</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• A small spoon of salt</li> <li>• Butter</li> <li>• Black Honey</li> <li>• Bee Honey</li> <li>• Nuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fill a pan with water and heat until boiling and then add a small spoon of salt to it.</li> <li>• While boiling add the flour, stirring constantly.</li> <li>• After it is cooked, put the food on a plate.</li> <li>• Add hot butter, nuts, and various types of honey as desired.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Tannour Bread</i></p> 	<p>One of the types of Bedouin bread is often made in the home garden.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flour</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Salt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put the flour on a tray then add water and salt.</li> <li>• Knead the mixture until it is firm.</li> <li>• Make a hole in the sand.</li> <li>• Place a tin barrel in the hole.</li> <li>• Light the coal on the sand in the barrel.</li> <li>• Clean the sides of the barrel using a wet cloth.</li> <li>• Put the bread on the edges of the barrel until cooked.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Sagg Bread</i></p> 	<p>A type of bread in the Egyptian desert: <i>Sinai</i>, <i>Matruh</i>, <i>Suez</i>, <i>Ismailia</i>, <i>Fayoum</i>, <i>Minya</i>, <i>Assiut</i>, and <i>Beni Suef</i>. The Widespread use is due to its unique taste and quick preparation. Its diameter is up to 80 cm.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flour</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Salt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put the flour on a tray then add water and salt.</li> <li>• Knead the mixture until it is firm.</li> <li>• Cut the dough and put it on a clean cloth.</li> <li>• Dust with a light layer of flour to prevent sticking.</li> <li>• Put a plate above the clay burner and light the fire.</li> <li>• Separate the dough by using a wooden stick.</li> <li>• Put thin slices upon the hot plate on both sides until cooked.</li> </ul>

Food name and pictures	Description	Ingredients	Preparation method
<p><i>Qarasa Bread</i></p> 	<p>The bread used by camel and sheep herdsman or hunters of birds and falcons in the desert because of the length of the grazing period that might reach 15 days. In addition, frequent mobility and time constraints usually prevent the creation of a baking oven.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flour</li> <li>• Water</li> <li>• Salt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put the flour on a tray then add water and salt.</li> <li>• Knead the mixture until it is firm.</li> <li>• Cut the dough and put it on a clean cloth.</li> <li>• Dust with a light layer of flour to prevent sticking.</li> <li>• Light the coal on the sand.</li> <li>• Put the bread on the hot sand and cover it completely with burnt coal for 8 minutes.</li> <li>• Drag the baked bread and clean it from the remains of sand and ash.</li> <li>• Eat it hot.</li> </ul>

**TABLE 1. HERITAGE FOODS OF EGYPTIAN BEDOUIN**

Source: Authors' own elaboration.

high-cost foods once or twice a year would be acceptable for most domestic Bedouins. The situation may differ for wealthy Bedouins and *Shikhes*, who usually host the reconciliation between the rival tribes, which is often accompanied by the slaughter of more than one animal.

Despite the masculine nature of the Bedouin society, the role of women was evident in the process of milking sheep and goats for the milk used in the food production, as well as collecting firewood and making clay kilns necessary to prepare the various types of bread associated with their identity and local culture as: *Tannour*, *Sagg*, and *Qarasa* bread. The mother regularly performs these tasks with the help of daughters, while the father and sons are devoted to grazing or hunting activities.

Indeed, the research reported that the name of food may vary from one Bedouin territory to another, while the ingredients and cooking methods remain stable (i.e. *Mebakkbaka* that also called *Macrona Jaria* and *Mashwy Hofra* that is also called *Mashwy Shawrma*). The results of the focus group revealed that there is a marked similarity between the heritage food of Egyptian Bedouins and Heritage food of Libyan Bedouins. The participants argued that the similarity is due to the same Bedouin roots of both Egyptians and Libyans especially Bedouins of the western desert of Egypt bordering Libya. Therefore, many people from both countries belong to the same tribe (*Qabila*) and regularly exchange visits.

## Conclusion and implications

While conducting the research, a methodology cited from a previous study was adopted, aiming at identifying the concept of heritage food. According to this methodology, we created our inclusion and exclusion criteria for the selected Bedouin traditional foods: which is heritage food, and which is not. The total selected number was 12 dishes. However, after getting the answers to the three questions in (figure one), four had to be excluded, considering that they were local traditional foods, but had not been defined as heritage by indigenous people. Thus, the final number of heritage dishes was only eight as shown in (table one).

The study is expected to contribute to methodology and knowledge. Using specific questions based on the literature to identify heritage food (figure one) may help researchers in formulating an effective instrument while addressing food heritage issues. After specifying heritage food and beginning data collection, a guide of focus groups or semi-structured interviews that can be applied in future studies (appendix one) was suggested. Otherwise, in cultural studies, participants must be well informed older people (Adikari & Lakmali, 2016) to gain a complete and valid description of the old heritage of a specific territory.

The contribution to knowledge is represented in providing a recipe book of some heritage foods of Egyptian Bedouins. This cultural scientific effort might be used for educational purposes, as well as to shed

# “THE CONTEMPORARY ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL UTILIZATION OF FOOD HERITAGE AND ITS RELATED POLICIES IN EGYPT ARE STILL LIMITED AND NEED MORE CONCERTED EFFORTS AMONG GOVERNMENTAL, ACADEMIC, AND BUSINESS ENTITIES TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABILITY AND ADOPT POWERFUL STRATEGIES OF CULTURAL POLICY”

light on Bedouin's legacy in Egypt that might open the door for future studies, especially with the scarcity of research that targets these regions. The concern of heritage food in Egypt could lead to successful heritagization of those treasures and direct the world's attention to it. For instance, the failure of all African cities to earn the title “UNESCO City of Gastronomy” (UNESCO, 2019) prompts us to administer more scientific efforts in this field to achieve such recognition for Egypt one day. Indeed, after our humble endeavor, we could demonstrate that Egyptian Bedouins have an excellent food culture, unique cooking techniques, and unique food habits. For instance, consider the kinds of Bedouin bread prepared using firewood, hot sand, and the clay kilns in the desert.

Furthermore, further research targeting discussions on the topics of immaterial food habits is still needed, as well as measuring the nutrition composition of heritage foods to check if they are sufficient for human needs. The contemporary economic and social utilization of food heritage and its related policies in Egypt still limited and need more concerted efforts among governmental, academic, and business entities to achieve sustainability and adopt powerful strategies of cultural policy. This claim comes in line with the discourse of the Egyptian minister of tourism when she said: “We have to change the concept ‘Egypt has many potential’ to ‘Egypt realized its potential’; consequently, we launched our national sustainable tourism development initiative ‘People to People’ to involve local people in the development processes, mainly in Sinai and Matruh”. Therefore, incorporating selections of heritage foods in tourism development will help to achieve successful cultural management of food legacy resources besides supporting the welfare of Bedouin inhabitants.

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## APPENDIX 1. Guide of Focus Group and Semi-Structured Interviews

### Dear Participant,

This discussion aims to collect data about the authentic food of Egyptian Bedouins. It will take not more than 30 minutes, and we will use the recorder only if you allow. The collected data will be only used for scientific purposes, and we would be grateful if you answer the following questions.

#### 1. Personal Data:

- Name and Bedouin tribe: \_\_\_\_\_
- Age: \_\_\_\_\_
- Bedouin region: \_\_\_\_\_
- Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Identifying Heritage Food

- What is the name/s of the local dish?
- Is the local food authentic, has deep roots in the region and not exotic?
- Is it able to make the past relevant for contemporary people?
- Is it highly valued and nominated as heritage food by Bedouin indigenous?

If one answer to the last three questions is NO, it is not "heritage food", so move on to the following dish. If all the answers were YES, then complete the next questions:

#### 3. Collecting Data About "Heritage Food"

- What are the ingredients of the dish?
- What are the cooking methods of it?
- What are the most famous Bedouin areas with it?
- What are the old stories related to it?
- Have there been any changes in its ingredients and form over time?
- What are the food habits associated with this dish?
- When do you usually eat it, is it prepared on certain occasions?
- With whom do you usually prepare and eat it?

**Thank you, please tell us if you wish to add something else.**

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