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Changes in the culinary culture of migrants following the February 2023 earthquakes: A case study of Hatay residents

2023 Şubat depremlerinin ardından göçmenlerin mutfak kültüründe yaşanan değişiklikler: Hatay sakinleri üzerine bir vaka çalışması

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Abstract

Objective: The present study aimed to investigate the impact of forced migration on the culinary cultures of individuals displaced from Hatay to various provinces following the February 6, 2023 earthquakes. The text places particular emphasis on the experiences of women and the transformations in their food-related practices.

Material and Method: A qualitative research design was employed. The data presented herein were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with 25 women who migrated from Hatay following the earthquakes. Thematic analysis was conducted to examine changes in food preparation, access to ingredients, communal practices, and emotional meanings attached to culinary traditions.

Results: The findings indicate that participants encountered substantial disruptions to their culinary routines. The key challenges experienced by the subjects of this study included limited access to traditional ingredients, economic difficulties, a lack of proper kitchen equipment, and the loss of communal environments. The absence of shared ovens and hospitality traditions resulted in a simplification of meals and a reduction in social gatherings. A significant proportion of respondents reported a decline in both

taste and satisfaction, attributed to the incorporation of unfamiliar ingredients. Notwithstanding the adversity faced by these communities, a notable resilience was exhibited by a proportion of the female population. This resilience manifested itself in the continuation of the preparation of traditional culinary dishes, which were regarded as cultural preservations and vehicles for the articulation of identity.

Conclusion: Following the earthquakes, women who migrated from Hatay experienced significant changes in their culinary practices. Economic hardships, lack of ingredients and equipment, and the loss of social environments made it difficult to prepare traditional dishes. The decline of communal cooking and hospitality traditions led to simpler meals. Nevertheless, some women continued to prepare traditional foods as a way to preserve their cultural identity; food functioned not only as nourishment but also as a means of maintaining a sense of belonging and resilience.

Özet

Amaç: Bu çalışma, 6 Şubat 2023 depremlerinin ardından Hatay'dan çeşitli illere zorunlu göç eden bireylerin mutfak kültürlerinde meydana gelen değişimleri incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmada özellikle kadınların deneyimlerine ve yemekle ilgili pratiklerinde yaşanan dönüşümlere odaklanılmıştır.

Materyal ve Yöntem: Araştırma nitel yöntemle yürütülmüştür. Deprem sonrası Hatay'dan göç eden 25 kadınla yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Veriler, geleneksel yemek hazırlığı, malzeme temini, toplu yemek pratikleri ve yemek kültürünün duygusal anlamları ekseninde tematik analiz yöntemiyle değerlendirilmiştir.

Bulgular: Araştırma bulguları, katılımcıların mutfak rutinlerinde ciddi aksamalar yaşadığını göstermektedir. Bu süreçte öne çıkan başlıca sorunlar; geleneksel malzemelere erişimde yaşanan kısıtlılık, ekonomik zorluklar, uygun mutfak ekipmanlarının eksikliği ve topluluk ortamlarının kaybı olarak sıralanabilir. Ortak fırınlar ve misafir ağırlama geleneklerinin yokluğu, yemeklerin sadeleşmesine ve sosyal buluşmaların azalmasına yol açmıştır. Katılımcıların önemli bir kısmı, yabancı malzemelerin kullanımına bağlı olarak yemeklerden alınan tat ve memnuniyette azalma yaşadıklarını belirtmiştir. Tüm bu olumsuzluklara rağmen kadınların bir kısmında dikkat çekici bir direnç gözlemlenmiştir. Bu direnç, geleneksel yemeklerin hazırlanmasına devam edilmesiyle kendini göstermiş ve bu yemekler, kültürel belleğin korunması ve kimliğin ifadesi için bir araç olarak görülmüştür.

Sonuç: Depremler sonrası Hatay'dan göç eden kadınların mutfak pratiklerinde ciddi değişimler yaşanmış; ekonomik zorluklar, malzeme ve ekipman eksiklikleri ile sosyal çevrenin kaybı, geleneksel yemeklerin hazırlanmasını zorlaştırmıştır. Ortak pişirme ve misafirlik kültürü zayıflamış, yemekler sadeleşmiştir. Ancak bazı kadınlar, geleneksel yemekleri sürdürerek kültürel kimliklerini yaşatmaya devam etmiş; yemek, yalnızca beslenme değil, aynı zamanda aidiyet ve direnç aracı olarak işlev görmüştür.

Introduction

Disasters are ecological events that disrupt the ordinary order of life societies, cause loss of life and property, and require external assistance when individuals cannot cope with them using existing means. However, the transformation of a natural event into a disaster is associated not only with its physical effects but also with the inadequacy of the physical, organizational, and mental infrastructure of the society in the affected area (1). Natural disasters are events that profoundly impact individuals. Such events disrupt the daily routine of individuals, compelling them to adapt to new economic, social, political, and psychological conditions (2). Türkiye, being a country with a high disaster risk, is a prime example of this phenomenon. Its geographical structure, topography, and climatic characteristics contribute to the high risk of natural disasters. The country is frequently subjected to various forms of natural disasters, including floods, landslides, and earthquakes, which often result in significant destruction (3). On February 6, 2023, two major earthquakes occurred in the Pazarcık district of Kahramanmaraş and the Elbistan district, with magnitudes of 7.8 and 7.5 Mw, respectively. These seismic events were followed by numerous aftershocks. These seismic events resulted in significant destruction across various provinces, including Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, Gaziantep, Malatya, Diyarbakır, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Adıyaman, Osmaniye, Adana, and Elazığ. The initial quakes left 50,783 individuals dead and 115,353 injured (4). Subsequent to the February 6 earthquakes, another earthquake with a magnitude of 6.3

Mw occurred on February 20, 2023, centered on Büyükçat - Samandağ in Hatay. Hatay, a province that has been particularly affected by seismic activity, experienced both physical and cultural damage as a result of these disasters. According to official data, the province's population decreased by approximately 60%, leading to a significant migration movement (5). Natural disasters have been shown to have far-reaching consequences, including the profound transformation of social structures (6). Environmental disasters, including droughts, floods, tsunamis, storms, volcanic eruptions, and earthquakes, have been known to profoundly alter living conditions in affected areas, often triggering large-scale migration patterns. Consequently, disaster-induced displacement has emerged as a significant global concern, encompassing a wide spectrum of displacement patterns ranging from forced displacement to voluntary migration (7).

The extant studies that have been conducted within the framework of the theme of migration in the literature are noteworthy. Tekin's (8) seminal study examined forced migration as a form of cultural trauma, while Avşar and Seçim's (9) research investigated the cultural exchange between Syrian immigrants in Konya and the local culinary landscape. Işkın (10) examined the contribution of women to culinary culture in the context of migration and culture, while Altay Kaya (11) evaluated Türkiye's experience with Syrian forced migration. Furthermore, Şen (12) investigated the role of immigrants from Kars in maintaining Kars cuisine in Kocaeli. Kara and Akdağ (13) examined the transformation of Syrian refugees' culinary culture in Mersin, Gaziantep, and Kilis. Ayyıldız (14) examined cultural change through the lens of Syrian students who migrated to Türkiye due to the war. Kipalev and Dölek (15) evaluated the processes of forced migration and return from Hatay after the February 6-20 earthquakes. Duman (16) and Duruel (2) addressed the disaster-migration relationship specific to Hatay, while Bakkaloğlu and Şen (17) focused on the impact of migration on culinary culture.

A substantial body of research has demonstrated that migration mobility exerts a considerable influence on various aspects of individuals' lives, including their demographic and economic structures, as well as their daily practices, particularly with regard to culinary traditions. However, academic studies on the transformation of culinary cultures among individuals subjected to forced migration as a result of natural disasters remain limited. In this context, the impact of forced migration due to earthquakes on the culinary cultures of individuals emerges as a salient and contemporary research problem. The present study aims to examine the impact of forced migration processes on the culinary culture of individuals who were compelled to migrate from Hatay to various provinces following the February 6-20, 2023 earthquakes. The objective of this study is to elucidate the alterations and adaptations in the gastronomic practices of these individuals. The research population consists of adult individuals who departed Hatay following the earthquake and relocated to different cities, and the study is constrained to this group. The primary inquiries to be addressed in this study are as follows: How are the effects of forced migration on culinary culture shaped? To what extent are migrant individuals able to maintain their traditional culinary practices? Under what conditions do they adopt the gastronomic elements of the regions they migrate to? Addressing these inquiries will facilitate a more profound comprehension of the dynamics of transformation and continuity in culinary culture within the context of post-disaster forced migration. The findings of this study will not only reveal the transformation of cultural practices at the individual and social level but will also serve to fill the existing gap in the literature on the relationship between migration and gastronomy. Moreover, it is anticipated that this study will contribute to the academic accumulation in the relevant field and provide theoretical guidance for similar studies to be conducted in the future.

Conceptual Framework

Forced migration

The term "forced migration" is defined as the involuntary displacement of individuals or communities against their will, precipitated by the unfeasibility or significant challenges associated with maintaining a sustainable life in their current environment (18). The phenomenon of migration, which is addressed from diverse perspectives within various academic disciplines, is broadly understood as the process by which individuals or communities relocate due to various factors. The dynamics that are effective in shaping social structures also play a decisive role in the nature of migration mobility. Migration can be voluntary, driven by personal choice, or compelled by external forces such as natural disasters, armed conflicts, political pressures, and violence. Such situations are classified as "forced migration" in the relevant literature (7).

Following the occurrence of natural disasters, such as earthquakes, forced migration movements transform not only the physical spaces but also the social, cultural, and psychological living spaces of individuals. In this context, the repercussions of the disaster are not confined to the region where it transpired; the sociological configuration of the migrated settlements is also directly influenced by this process (6). Individuals who are displaced may encounter a multitude of challenges, including economic insufficiency, social adaptation difficulties, social exclusion, and discrimination (19). The earthquakes that occurred between February 6 and 20, 2023, resulted in significant loss of life, homes, workplaces, and social networks for many individuals in Hatay. This crisis has had profound and long-lasting effects on the social structure and the physical infrastructure of the city. The aftermath of the earthquake gave rise to profound feelings of anxiety, grief, and trauma. In response to these circumstances, a significant number of individuals sought to mitigate the adverse effects by migrating to other cities, either temporarily or permanently (15). Post-earthquake migration mobility has precipitated a multifaceted restructuring, both spatial and social. While some individuals relocated to less damaged surrounding villages, others sought refuge in large cities that remained untouched by the seismic event. Notably, individuals who had previously migrated from rural to urban areas tended to return to rural areas, either to be with their relatives or to settle in less damaged areas. In addition to the earthquake victims who were placed in temporary shelters such as hotels, public guesthouses, and Credit Dormitories Authority (KYK) by the state, kinship relations and economic opportunities were the determinants of migration to metropolitan cities (16).

Forced migration and culinary culture

The phenomenon of migration should not be considered exclusively as a process of spatial displacement; rather, it should be regarded as a multidimensional process of social restructuring that transforms individuals' cultural practices, living habits, and identities. In this context, culinary culture emerges as a significant indicator of both the continuity and transformation experienced by migrants. This assertion is predicated on the premise that sustenance is not merely a biological necessity but also a foundational element in the establishment of social belonging, identity, and cultural transmission (20). During the migration process, individuals are confronted with the gastronomic practices of their place of origin and interact with this new cultural environment. However, not every individual or community adapts to the new environment in the same way. Culinary practices, which play a significant role in the formation of cultural identity, are either preserved in the place of migration or undergo transformation over time, resulting in a new synthesis (9). While immigrants endeavor to adapt to their new environment, they also strive to maintain the food culture they bring from their past. This dynamic interplay between preservation and transformation exemplifies the intricate and evolving nature of immigrant cuisine, underscoring its role as a multifaceted

cultural manifestation (10).

Culinary practices that have emerged in the wake of forced migration serve as a reflection of not only the dietary patterns of individuals, but also their emotional bonds, nostalgia, and strategies employed to preserve their cultural identity. For migrants, the consumption of familiar flavors serves a dual function: it facilitates a connection with their past and assists in the creation of a "sense of home" within their new living spaces. In this context, culinary practices function as a space where migrants rebuild their identities, reinforce their sense of belonging, and ensure cultural continuity (12). A substantial body of research has emerged in the academic literature, examining the role of culinary culture in the context of migration. This research has illuminated how culinary practices undergo transformations during the migration process, and the subsequent effects these transformations engender at the individual and social levels. Noteworthy contributions in this area include studies by Altay Kaya (11) and Kara and Akdağ (13), which have explored the experiences of Syrian asylum seekers, individuals displaced by internal migration, and refugees. However, the impact of forced displacement resulting from major disasters, such as the earthquakes that occurred in February 2023, on culinary culture remains under-explored. In this context, how individuals displaced after a traumatic experience such as an earthquake preserve their culinary culture in their new living spaces, to what extent they transform it, and how they rebuild their gastronomic belonging emerges as an important research question.

Material and Method

The present study adopts a qualitative research design, specifically utilising the case study model to explore a sociocultural phenomenon. The case under consideration focuses on individuals who were compelled to migrate from Hatay province to various other provinces in the aftermath of the earthquakes centred in Kahramanmaraş between February 6 and 20, 2023. The employment of a case study approach facilitates an in-depth examination of the culinary cultural transformations experienced by these individuals in the context of forced migration (21). The fieldwork was conducted between November and December 2024, approximately one year after the earthquakes. The purposive sampling method was employed to select adult individuals originally from the Antakya district of Hatay, one of the regions most severely affected by the disaster in terms of both destruction and population displacement. The present sampling method is focused on participants who have a high level of knowledge about the research phenomenon and who are able to provide rich, detailed data. Furthermore, the snowball sampling technique was used to extend the reach of the study, with participants being recruited through referrals, thereby enhancing the depth and breadth of the data collected. The interview process was terminated at this juncture, as data saturation was achieved with the observation of repetitions in the data obtained from the 25th participant. Consequently, the findings from the 25th interview were excluded from the analysis process. This approach is founded on the principle of data saturation, a valid concept in qualitative research (43).

The final sample consisted of 25 female participants who had migrated from Hatay and who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. The primary objective of this study was to understand the transformation processes of culinary culture at both the individual and cultural levels within the context of forced migration following a natural disaster. The interviews were conducted using a pre-constructed semi-structured interview form. Table 1 presents the functional linkages and theoretical foundations of the interview questions developed for this study. Thematic analysis of the data revealed that each question was systematically designed to explore key dimensions such as changes in residential settings after displacement, transformations in dietary habits, shifts in social and cultural dining practices, and adaptations in kitchen resources and infrastructure. The interview guide comprises eight questions, each of which is aligned with a specific research theme and supported by relevant literature.

Table 1. Interview questions, research themes, and theoretical foundations

Question No	Question Content	Research Theme / Purpose	Related Literature and Key Concepts
1	After the earthquake, in which city did you settle? Were you able to obtain Hatay-specific products? Which products and how obtained?	Post-migration living location and access to local products	Bilgili & Siegel (22) – Migration and belonging; Bowen & De Master (23) – Rural food and access
2	Have your dietary habits changed since the earthquake? If so, what kind of changes?	Changes in diet and transformations in eating habits	Fischler (24) – Food and identity; Chakona & Shackleton (25) – Dietary preferences among migrants
3	Has there been any change in the frequency of preparing local cuisine compared to the pre-earthquake period? What are these changes?	Changes in habits of preparing local dishes	Appadurai (26) – National cuisine and food culture; Avieli (27) – Food and community
4	Have there been changes in table setting or social eating habits related to Hatay's hospitality culture and communal dining?	Transformation in social dining practices	Counihan (28) – Food and social meaning; food and social rituals
5	Do you perceive a transformation in your culinary culture after the earthquake? If yes, how?	Cultural adaptation and change in culinary culture	Sutton (29) – Food and memory; Holtzman (30) – Food and memory
6	Have you been influenced by the culinary culture of the region you migrated to? Have new dishes entered your daily diet?	New cultural influences and culinary interactions	Mintz & Du Bois (31) – Food anthropology; cross-cultural food interactions
7	Do you prepare Hatay-specific dishes using non-local ingredients? How does this affect the taste experience?	Adaptation of traditional dishes and taste experience	Trubek (32) – Terroir and local tastes; Bell & Valentine (33) – Food and place relationships
8	Have there been changes in kitchen products and equipment after the earthquake?	Changes in kitchen infrastructure and resources	Bowen & De Master (23) – Rural food production; Terragni & Roos (34). – Migration and food culture

The ethics committee approval for this study was granted by Hatay Mustafa Kemal University Ethics Committee (Decision No: E-21817443-050.99-441282, dated November 2024). Prior to the initiation of the study, written or verbal consent was obtained from each participant.

Data analysis

In the analysis of the data obtained in this study, qualitative data analysis techniques, specifically thematic analysis and descriptive analysis, were employed to explore participants' narratives in depth. Participant expressions were examined meticulously, and similar expressions were grouped and coded thematically in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (35) thematic analysis framework. This approach facilitated the identification of recurring patterns and the construction of meaningful themes directly derived from the data (36). A descriptive and

inductive approach was adopted to ensure that the themes remained grounded in the participants' actual statements and lived experiences (37). This approach entailed a systematic examination of the participants' forced migration experiences and the transformations in their culinary practices and food-related identities. The descriptive coding process facilitated the organisation of complex narratives into coherent thematic categories, and representative participant quotations were selected to exemplify each theme (38).

In order to enhance the credibility of the findings, member checking was incorporated into the research process. In this process, selected findings and interpretations were disseminated to the participants with a view to eliciting their feedback and confirming the accuracy of the findings (39). This strategy not only helped validate the interpretations but also ensured alignment with the participants' intended meanings. Furthermore, the incorporation of researcher field notes and observations was undertaken to enrich the contextual understanding and support triangulation, thereby enhancing the depth and credibility of the qualitative analysis (40). This comprehensive methodological strategy was implemented to evaluate the influence of the migration process on the culinary culture, practices and social meanings associated with food of the participants.

Results

The study comprised a total of 25 participants, all of whom were female. The demographic composition of the sample is as follows: Sixteen of the subjects were married, nine were single, seventeen were not employed, and eight were actively employed. The age distribution of the participants is as follows: The age demographic of the subjects is as follows: 10 individuals are between the ages of 35 and 44, 9 are between the ages of 45 and 54, and 6 are between the ages of 55 and 64. With respect to their educational attainment, 18 participants had completed primary school, 1 had completed high school, and 6 were undergraduate graduates. At the time of the earthquake, 22 participants resided in the city centre and 3 resided in the village (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive information of the participants (n:25)

Gender		Marital status		Employment status	
Female	Male	Married	Single	Unemployed	17
25	0	16	9	Active	8
Age		**Education**		**Place of residence at the time of the earthquake**	
35-44	10	Primary	18	City center	Village
45-54	9	High school	1	22	3
55-64	6	Undergraduate	6		

Research Question 1. A descriptive analysis was conducted in accordance with the responses provided by the participants, and four primary dimensions were identified: settlement areas, products procured, difficulties encountered, and procurement methods. Settlement regions: In the aftermath of the earthquake, a significant number of individuals dispersed to various cities across Türkiye and other countries. The following cities have been identified as the most migrated: The following cities have been identified: Eskişehir, Ankara, Nevşehir, Istanbul, Kocaeli, Mersin, Adana, Antalya, Niğde, Muğla, Aydın, Bilecik, Izmir, and Riyadh in Saudi Arabia. The most frequently purchased local products are pepper paste, pomegranate syrup, olive oil, cheese, sürk, various spices such as zahter, chili pepper, and sumac, as well as olives, coffee, and vegetables including zucchini and eggplant (see Table 3). The items in question reflect a clear preference for regionally distinctive and culturally embedded food products within local procurement practices.

Table 3. Most commonly procured Hatay-specific products

Product	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Pepper paste	20	62.5%
Pomegranate syrup	16	50.0%
Olive oil	14	45.8%
Cheese	12	37.5%
Sürk	10	33.3%
Spices (zahter, sumac, etc.)	10	33.3%
Olives	9	29.2%
Coffee	8	25.0%
Vegetables (zucchini, etc.)	8	25.0%

The methods employed in procuring local products, and the challenges encountered by respondents, can be categorised into several key themes. One of the primary means of access to these products was through personal travel to Hatay, as many respondents indicated that they were able to obtain local items during their visits. This observation highlights the fact that a considerable proportion of these products remains exclusively available within the region. Another commonly cited method involved the support of relatives or acquaintances residing in Hatay, who facilitated access to local goods. Furthermore, a number of respondents reported sourcing specific Hatay-specific items from local markets and delicatessens, particularly in larger urban centres. However, the availability of these products in such retail outlets is often inconsistent and limited. A small number of respondents also made mention of the utilisation of the internet and online platforms for the procurement of products such as pepper paste and coffee. Notwithstanding this fact, online accessibility was generally described as restricted, with many items only obtainable through physical presence in Hatay (see Table 4).

Table 4. Procurement methods for local products

Procurement Method	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Travel to Hatay	17	54.2%
Help from relatives/acquaintances	9	29.2%
Local markets/delicatessens	-	Descriptive only
Internet / Online shopping	3	8.3%

A significant challenge identified in the procurement of local products is the difficulty in locating and accessing Hatay-specific items outside the region. It was emphasised by a significant proportion of respondents that such products are not readily available in the cities where they currently reside, which significantly limits access. Another salient issue is the geographical distance and associated travel difficulties. The geographical distance and logistical challenges associated with travelling to Hatay have the effect of creating considerable difficulties for those seeking to obtain these products directly from the source. Furthermore, the escalating costs associated with procurement, notably those originating from transportation and shipping, impose a substantial financial strain. These cost-related barriers add an additional layer of difficulty, especially for those who rely on external means to access region-specific goods (see Table 5).

Table 5. Challenges encountered during procurement

Challenge	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Difficulty accessing products	14	45.8%
Travel and distance-related difficulties	12	37.5%
High prices and shipping costs	5	16.6%

The analysis indicates that a significant proportion of Hatay-specific local products is obtained primarily through domestic travel or with the assistance of family members and acquaintances residing in the region. This underscores the persistent significance of Hatay as the predominant point of entry for such goods and highlights the constrained availability of these products in other urban centres. The most frequently mentioned items were pepper paste, pomegranate syrup and olive oil, reflecting both their cultural significance and high demand. While some respondents noted that local markets and delicatessens in major urban areas do offer a selection of Hatay products, this access is often limited. The challenges cited included price increases and concerns about product authenticity and quality. The advent of online ordering has emerged as a partial alternative, particularly for certain non-perishable goods. However, its utility was constrained by limited product variety and the unavailability of many region-specific items through digital platforms.

Research Question 2. The responses of the participants indicate that individuals have experienced divergent levels of changes in their dietary habits following the earthquake. The statements made by the participants can be categorised into three overarching themes (see Table 6).

Table 6. Changes in dietary habits after the earthquake

Theme	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Participants
No change in dietary habits	11	44.0%	P4, P7, P8, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P16, P17, P20, P21, P25
Changes due to lack of specific local ingredients	9	36.0%	P1, P2, P5, P6, P9, P18, P19, P22, P23
Changes due to social and cultural disruptions	5	20.0%	P5, P6, P11, P19, P21

Some participants reported no significant change in their eating habits. However, even within this group, difficulties in accessing certain local ingredients were mentioned. Despite these challenges, many continued to prepare traditional dishes as much as possible. Other participants noted clear changes in their dietary patterns, mainly due to the lack of specific ingredients essential to Hatay cuisine. The unavailability of items such as white pumpkin, salty yogurt, yellow flour, spices, *Samandağ pepper*, and stuffed eggplant made it difficult to prepare certain traditional meals. A shift in breakfast habits was also observed, as participants moved from traditional foods—such as cottage cheese, green olives, and pomegranate syrup—to more accessible modern alternatives. The loss of traditional bakery products like *biberli bread*, lahmacun, and *tepsi kebab* also contributed to these changes.

It is evident that social and cultural factors also exerted a significant influence. The displacement of family members and the decline in guest-hosting traditions following the earthquake resulted in a reduction in the frequency of large family meals. The practice of shared meals with neighbours and extended family members became less prevalent, being replaced by smaller and more practical meals. It has been reported by a number of participants that they have been consuming fewer meals per day. In general, approximately 50% of the subjects demonstrated alterations in their dietary routines following the disaster. The primary reasons for this shift are attributed to difficulties in accessing local products, changes in social dining practices, and adaptation to new living conditions. Notable trends included increased consumption of pastries, reduced variety in vegetable-based dishes, and altered breakfast and communal eating traditions.

Research Question 3. An analysis of the data reveals that changes have occurred at different levels in the frequency of local food production in the aftermath of the earthquake. The responses were then subjected to a thorough analysis, which yielded three primary themes (see Table 7).

Table 7. Changes in the frequency of cooking local dishes after the earthquake

Theme	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Participants
No change in frequency	10	40.0%	P4, P5, P8, P10, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P25
Decrease in frequency of preparing local dishes	12	48.0%	P1, P2, P3, P6, P9, P18, P19, P20, P21, P22, P23, P24

A number of participants reported no significant change in the frequency with which they prepare local dishes. Despite the challenges encountered in accessing specific ingredients, which periodically impeded the preparation of certain meals, these individuals generally exhibited a commitment to preserving their culinary traditions. Conversely, a considerable number of participants indicated a decline in the frequency of preparing traditional dishes compared to previous practices. It has been documented that certain dishes, including *borani*, *lahmacun*, *biberli ekmek*, *kağıt kebabı*, *oruk*, and *dolma*, are prepared less frequently. This is primarily attributed to the limited availability of essential ingredients. In particular, oven-based dishes such as *lahmacun*, *biberli ekmek*, and *kağıt kebab* were noted as being difficult or impossible to prepare in their current living conditions. It was also emphasised that the traditional culinary practices once reserved for hosting guests have become increasingly rare. It was posited by a number of participants that a shift had occurred in their culinary habits, with a tendency towards simpler and less labour-

intensive local meals. This change is indicative of a more widespread tendency to incorporate more readily available, everyday local foods into diets, a tendency that is shaped by the physical and economic constraints of life in the aftermath of a disaster. A marked transformation in eating habits and the frequency of cooking traditional local dishes has been observed in the aftermath of the earthquake. Nevertheless, certain individuals have endeavoured to preserve and perpetuate the culinary heritage of Hatay within the limits of their circumstances.

Research Question 4. The data demonstrate that Hatay's hospitality culture and the practice of crowded dining tables were significantly impacted by the earthquake. The participants' responses are grouped around three main themes (see Table 8):

Table 8. Changes in table setting and social eating habits after the earthquake

Theme	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Participants
Dramatic change and increased sense of loneliness	15	60.0%	P1, P5, P6, P7, P8, P10, P11, P18, P19, P21, P22, P23, P24, P25, P13
Contraction in table size and reduction in dish variety	7	28.0%	P2, P13, P19, P21, P22, P24, P25
Continuation of communal meals with familiar social circles	3	12.0%	P4, P16, P23

The loss of familiar surroundings and the weakening of social ties after the earthquake have led to a significant decrease in crowded tables and the culture of hosting guests. The phenomenon of feeling lonely due to the absence of others: *P1: "Unfortunately, there is no one here. In Hatay, there was a notable increase in population density. We cook fewer varieties of food." P5: "The absence of neighborly behavior among the local populace is a contributing factor. We are unable to find anyone with whom to share a coffee or a meal." P7: "Individuals do not come to our door. I, too, have reduced my culinary repertoire and portion sizes. P10: "There is a complete absence of social interaction. This absence of social interaction is the most challenging aspect of the situation."* The loss of the former social environment and the presence of cultural differences have contributed to this situation. *P6: "Regrettably, there is an absence of culture or humanity here." P8: "The people here are not like those from our place; they do not have much of a hospitality habit." P11: "Our culture is very different. We love guests, but not here."* The experience of loneliness during holidays and special occasions: *P18: "During holidays, we used to cook herise in our village, we used to cook together. The absence of these traditions in the host culture is a significant contributing factor to the sense of alienation experienced during these visits."*

Participants have indicated that the dimensions of the table setting have diminished, and they have reduced the number of dishes they prepare. This decline has been accompanied by a shift towards smaller portions and a reduction in the variety of dishes offered. *P2 stated, "We used to host guests every day in Hatay, but now we don't have big tables." P13 noted, "There are no guests; we can't find anyone here. We cook fewer dishes." P19 noted that their dining tables have become smaller.* The transition has also entailed a shift in social dynamics, marked by a reduced interaction with family and social circles. *P22 notes that since they are separated from their family, their gatherings are not as large as before. P21 noted that maintaining their previous lifestyle is only possible if friends and family from Hatay visit.*

A few participants stated that they were able to maintain their social eating habits thanks to the presence of Hatay locals around them. The role of familiar social circles in maintaining

social eating habits: *P4: "No, it didn't work out; everything continued the same since I went with my family." P16: "We have a few Hatay acquaintances here, and they have contributed to an enhancement of the situation." P23 noted that they were fortunate to have relatives present, as they often host guests.*

The responses indicate a decline in hospitality and crowded dining tables in Hatay following the earthquake, a change that is evident in the practices of food preparation. Participants highlighted the erosion of social bonds, shifts in the culture of neighborliness and hospitality, and the diminution of both the size of meals and the variety of their contents. The consequences of these shifts in social dynamics and culinary practices have been profound, manifesting in a decline of communal dining and an inclination towards more intimate, unadorned repasts. This phenomenon underscores the pivotal role of social ties and hospitality in maintaining well-being and sense of community.

Research Question 5. A comprehensive analysis revealed that the participants underwent multifaceted transformations in their culinary practices following the forced migration. A thematic analysis of the data yielded six predominant themes: limited access to local products, shifts in dining culture, economic hardship, adoption of alternative production practices, Cultural adaptation difficulties and social isolation, and participants who reported no change. The ensuing sections will present each theme, accompanied by the frequency data and participant opinions.

A considerable proportion of the participants indicated experiencing challenges in accessing products characteristic of Hatay cuisine in their new environment. The absence of key ingredients such as tandoori, zahter, pepper paste, and salted yogurt hindered the preparation of traditional dishes. *P1 articulated the challenge of this limitation, stating, "Given the uncertainty surrounding the availability of all local products, we are unable to fully engage in the preparation of our traditional culinary offerings. We are unable to prepare tandoori bread or pepper bread." P24 further elaborates, "I used to make my own tomato paste in Hatay, but now I can't. Consequently, they resorted to producing salty yogurt in a domestic setting.*

Table 9. Post-Earthquake transformations in culinary culture

Theme	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Participants
Limited access to local products	11	44.0%	P1, P3, P4, P6, P7, P9, P11, P14, P18, P21, P24
Shifts in dining culture	10	40.0%	P2, P5, P6, P10, P13, P15, P16, P17, P19, P22
Economic hardship	9	36.0%	P2, P3, P6, P7, P8, P11, P18, P20, P24
Alternative production practices	2	8.0%	P21, P24
Cultural adaptation difficulties and social isolation	7	28.0%	P1, P6, P7, P10, P19, P20, P25
No significant change	8	32.0%	P4, P8, P12, P13, P15, P16, P23, P25

It has been observed that these habits have significantly decreased in Hatay cuisine, where traditionally crowded tables are set and hosting guests is important. Ten of the participants indicated a reduction in the variety of food they prepare, suggesting a decline in the traditional guest culture. *P5: "Our guest habits have almost ceased to exist. This shift has led to a decline in the variety of dishes prepared and the quantities of food served." P19 further elaborates on the practical*

challenges faced by their kitchen, stating, "Our kitchen is designed for crowded tables. It is challenging for a person to eat with three others. I am unable to do so with the same level of enthusiasm and appetite."

Nine of the participants indicated that they had undergone changes in their culinary practices due to economic factors. The rising cost of rent, limited financial resources, and elevated prices of food have led to a decline in the frequency and cost of meals, with some individuals opting to forgo the purchase of certain products altogether. P2 articulated the profound impact on both their finances and morale, stating, *"We were greatly affected financially and spiritually. I am unable to locate local products, and I face challenges in procuring them.* P7 further elaborates on the financial strain imposed by residing in a rental property, stating, *"We are burdened with rental expenses, which significantly impacts our financial well-being. The cost of transporting goods is high, and the quality and taste of local products are suboptimal.*

Some participants have initiated domestic production due to unavailability of local products. This phenomenon exemplifies individual endeavors to uphold cultural practices. *P24: "I have recently started producing salty yogurt in my own kitchen. She acknowledges the challenge of producing tomato paste and is currently exploring alternative methods. P21: "Occasionally, za'atar is not available. When such products are not available, she resorted to preparing the spice mix using dried za'atar.*

Some participants indicated that they experienced feelings of loneliness due to the absence of strong neighborly relations and a lack of a social environment in their new locations. They noted that this situation had a negative impact on the sharing of food and the quality of their meals. *P6: "The culture is very different here, there are no guests to invite. This has led to a reduction in my cooking frequency." P25 further elaborates on this sentiment, noting the stark differences between the cultural practices in Hatay and those in the current location. We are unable to find guests to have coffee with. This aspect, she asserts, represents the most significant transformation.*

Some participants stated that they did not experience a significant change in their kitchen habits. Among these individuals, some reported maintaining their usual routines, while others attempted to sustain these practices by periodically visiting Hatay. *P23 noted that Hatay serves as a second home for them, and they periodically return there. We engage in activities that are not possible here. P13 stated, "I do not think so, there has not been much change."*

Research Question 6. The participants were asked questions about their experiences with the culinary culture of their origin and whether they had incorporated novel culinary elements into their daily dietary routines. The data obtained revealed that the majority of the participants were to a limited extent affected by this culture, while some individuals incorporated local products due to necessity. The data were collected under three main themes: partial adoption of new dishes, forced adaptation, and no interaction:

Among these, only four participants acknowledged a moderate impact from the regional culinary culture, accompanied by a practice of preparing specific dishes in their own kitchens. These participants provided examples of dishes such as manti, noodles, börek, and tantuni. *P1 stated, "Foods such as manti and noodles became more prevalent on our tables. We consume pottery cheese, while children eat kashar cheese." P10 further elaborates, "I found tantuni particularly appealing due to its similarity to my own culinary preferences. I also make it at home." Participant P23 expressed a preference for tantuni, noting that they had prepared it exclusively. I did not prepare the other dishes." P24 noted that dishes such as manti, noodles, and borek constituted a larger share of their diet. However, they are not particularly palatable, and we endeavor to limit our consumption of them to a minimum."*

While some participants did not directly adopt new dishes, they were compelled to utilize certain products from their new place of residence. This utilization is predominantly confined to breakfast products or fundamental food items. *P1 stated, "Given the lack of consistent access to our own breakfast provisions, we have adopted the consumption of pot cheese from the local market." P2: "No, we were not affected. We merely had to use their*

Table 10. The impact of the migrated city's culinary culture on daily nutrition

Theme	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Participants
Partial adoption of new dishes	4	16.0%	P1, P10, P23, P24
Forced adaptation and product use	2	8.0%	P1, P2
No interaction with local culinary culture	19	76.0%	P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P11, P12, P13, P14, P15, P16, P17, P18, P19, P21, P22, P25

products. I did not find their food appealing."

The majority of participants stated that they were not influenced by the culinary culture of the region to which they had migrated. These participants indicated that they either did not sample new dishes or, if they did, they did not repeat them because they did not align with their preferences. *P5 stated, "It never did." P9 stated, "I sampled some of their products, such as poppy seed pie, but found it unpalatable and do not prepare it at home." P19 concurred, stating, "I was not affected because I do not find it pleasant." P21: "No, it does not align with our culinary preferences." P22 noted that the culinary culture of the place they stayed was not a significant factor in their experience, as it lacked clear characteristics that would have influenced their preferences. P25 stated that the experience did not resonate with them and did not appeal to their preferences.*

Research Question 7. The participants were asked questions regarding the preparation of Hatay-specific dishes incorporating non-local ingredients in their respective migratory regions and whether this practice led to a discernible alteration in the flavour profile of these dishes. The data obtained revealed that migrants experienced significant difficulties in procuring food, had difficulty in reaching original tastes, and therefore experienced sensory dissatisfaction.

The majority of participants indicated that they persisted in preparing Hatay-specific dishes yet noted that the vegetables and spices available in their new locations did not adequately meet their expectations in terms of flavor. Participants further elaborated on the pronounced disparities, particularly regarding the diversity of vegetables, bell peppers, eggplants, beans, spices (zahter, dried mint, hot peppers), and tomato paste. *P1 stated, "We are compelled to continue this practice, yet we find that the resulting flavors do not match those of our original cuisine. Even the greens lack flavor." P7 noted that they were unable to locate the pepper paste, which they had procured from A101, and it was accompanied by lemon salt, rendering it unpalatable. I intend to purchase it when I visit Hatay, but until then, I must resort to alternative options. P9 noted that his meals, such as zaatar and dried mint, had lost their previous flavor due to his inability to bring most spices. P19 noted that the eggplants and beans available in Hatay significantly differ from those in his home region. There is a noticeable change in the flavor profile of the meals." P24: "Even the beans and eggplants have undergone a change in taste. When utilizing the products available here, the flavor of the meals is noticeably diminished."*

Some participants indicated that taste differences are inevitable, depending on the region where the ingredients used are cultivated. However, they evaluated this situation within a more general framework. *Participant P4 articulated this perspective, stating, "I cannot achieve the same level of taste efficiency in vegetable dishes due to the varying growing conditions." Another participant, P16, noted that the vegetables and greens in their region possess a distinct flavor profile. While I am obliged to utilize them, I perceive a decline in the gustatory satisfaction of the dishes." P14 further noted that spices sourced from the local region were similarly unsatisfactory. It appears that they render the dish tasteless."*

Table 11. Impact of non-local ingredients on Hatay dishes

Theme	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Participants
Cooking with non-local products and resulting loss of taste	21	84.0%	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P15, P17, P18, P19, P20, P21, P22, P23, P24
Effect of regional differences in products on taste	3	12.0%	P4, P14, P16
Avoidance of cooking due to expected taste loss	1	4.0%	P25

Only one participant indicated that they do not cook with non-local products. This reluctance can be attributed to a preconceived notion or prior experience indicating that the flavor expectations will not be met. This tendency is further elaborated by P25, who asserts, *"No, I do not."*

Research Question 8. The participants were asked questions regarding any alterations that had been made to the products and equipment used in their kitchens following the seismic event. The responses obtained revealed the difficulties experienced, the inaccessibility of materials, and changes in cooking habits. The majority of participants indicated that they encountered challenges in accessing local equipment and materials, while also highlighting other difficulties encountered in the kitchen area.

Many participants mentioned that they had difficulties in supplying after the earthquake and the lack of some local kitchen equipment. The absence of specialized kitchenware, such as the kunefe tray, aşur beater, oruk machine, was particularly salient. Participants indicated that they endeavored to procure these items over time in an effort to address these deficiencies. The absence of specialized equipment was found to have a significant impact on the taste and presentation of dishes, particularly those prepared with traditional local cuisine. For instance, participant *P2 noted, "I lack both a kunefe tray and a aşur machine. This has led to challenges in the preparation of traditional dishes. Another participant, P9, noted that they too lacked essential equipment, including a kunefe tray, an oruk machine, an aşur machine, kebab skewers, and a barbecue machine. Participant P13 noted that the majority of their belongings are still in Hatay, explaining their inability to procure essential equipment such as a kunefe tray or aşur machine within the local context. P23 stated that he lacked both a kunefe tray and an aşur machine. P21 noted the absence of a food processor, oruk machine, or kunefe tray in their location.*

It was reported by some participants that as their residences became more compact, the kitchen space underwent a similar reduction, thereby impacting their culinary practices. It was observed that the variety of food became limited with these reduced areas and fewer equipment. The participant observations indicate the impact of physical space constraints on the diversity of culinary creations in the kitchen and the practices of cooking. *Participant P10 articulated the impact of constrained spatial dimensions on culinary endeavors, stating, "Given the limitation of my daughter's residence to a single room, our kitchen environment is constrained. My kitchen was sizable, but now that it is reduced in size, I have fewer pots and pans." P14 noted that their kitchen movement space had become smaller, resulting in a reduced number of items, though they acknowledged that it remained sufficient. Participant P16 noted, "I was unable to bring any of my belongings, as we had started to tidy up over time. Despite this, she has managed to retain the majority of her belongings, though she acknowledges that the space available in her current kitchen is less than that of her previous one.*

The majority of participants indicated that they encountered challenges in accessing local products, which resulted in a change in

Table 12. Post-Earthquake changes in kitchen products and equipment

Theme	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	Participants
Shortage of equipment and supply difficulties	13	52.0%	P1, P2, P5, P6, P9, P11, P13, P15, P17, P20, P21, P23, P24
Limitations due to small kitchen space and physical conditions	4	16.0%	P10, P14, P16, P22
Inaccessibility of local products (spices, vegetables, storage)	14	56.0%	P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9, P12, P14, P16, P17, P18, P19, P20, P25

the taste of the food due to the unavailability of ingredients such as spices and vegetables. Additionally, there were difficulties accessing Hatay-specific materials and equipment for freezing and refrigeration. *P18: "I encounter challenges in procuring Hatay spices, and I am not always able to access local products. I previously used a deep freezer in Hatay, but I no longer have access to that equipment." P7 further elaborated on the challenges faced, stating, "I was unable to bring any materials. We continue to function with limited resources." I currently possess a limited selection of kitchen tools and materials." P9 further elaborates on the disparities by stating, "In general, the majority of my food products are less than those in Hatay."*

Discussion and Conclusion

This study provides a multi-faceted analysis of the shifts in culinary practices among women residing in Hatay or those compelled to migrate from the city in the aftermath of the earthquakes that occurred on 6-20 February 2023. The findings reveal significant transformations in culinary culture in terms of both physical infrastructure and the content and presentation of meals. This transformation is not merely a necessity imposed by material conditions; it also represents a space where cultural identity and the sense of belonging are restructured. The majority of participants reported that due to limited access to local products, the lack of traditional kitchen equipment, and economic constraints, they were either unable to prepare many traditional dishes or had to significantly alter ingredients and cooking methods. This finding is consistent with the observations of İflazoğlu and Aksoy (41), who emphasised the iconic dishes of Hatay cuisine as indicators of cultural identity. The failure to prepare these dishes due to physical and emotional disruptions after the earthquake highlights the fragile nature of cultural continuity.

The erosion of social bonds has also precipitated a shift in the significance attributed to communal dining. The Hatay dining table, traditionally built upon solidarity, sharing and ritual values, has now been reduced to a simpler, more functional meal for nuclear family members. This phenomenon aligns with the findings of Bakkaloğlu and Şen (17) in her study on the effects of post-disaster migration on local cuisine. However, in the present study, this transformation is not interpreted solely as a state of deprivation, but also as a practice of reconstruction and adaptation. It was evident that a number of participants exhibited an elevated level of cultural resilience, as evidenced by their endeavours to sustain traditional culinary practices despite facing challenges related to the scarcity of essential ingredients and equipment. This finding lends further support to Işkın's (10) argument that women fulfil a dual role in the kitchen, both in terms of production and transmission. Following migration, many women sampled the local cuisines of their new environments. However, they seldom formed emotional or cultural bonds with these foods. Instead, they maintained their own regional cuisine as a marker of identity. This finding is analogous to the study by Kara and Akdağ (13) on Syrian women. However, in contrast to that study, the resistance to new culinary cultures observed here is grounded more deeply in emotional and identity-related dimen-

sions.

Furthermore, the study revealed a strong narrative suggesting that the change in ingredients resulted not only in differences in taste, but also in a perceived "loss of authenticity." Expressions such as "the dish had no soul" or "as long as we eat, it doesn't matter what" point to a loss not only of flavour, but also of collective memory and emotional fulfilment. This finding is consistent with the conclusions of Kipalev and Dölek (15), who emphasised that, for migrants, food represents not only a physical necessity but also an emotional practice. In contrast, a notable contrast emerges between this study and Akarçay's (42) ethnographic research on field kitchens established after disasters. Akarçay's approach to crisis kitchens as a component of social reconstruction is examined, while the present study underscores the prevalence of isolation and loneliness, particularly in contexts of container housing and rented accommodations. Consequently, the transformation of culinary culture in the aftermath of a disaster is not solely a physical one but is also influenced by shifts in social capital and solidarity networks.

The study's findings reveal the fragility of Hatay's culinary heritage beyond its 2017 designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy and emphasise the need for its continuous reproduction. Cultural heritage is not merely a legacy inherited from the past; it is a practice that is redefined in each moment of crisis, woven through resistance, and sustained through collective memory. In this context, Hatay's cuisine must be considered as more than a mere repository of the past or a superficial tourist attraction; rather, it should be regarded as a dynamic expression of cultural identity that serves to reinforce its resilience in the face of adversity. This research not only documents the culinary transformations caused by the earthquake but also highlights the active role of women as custodians of culinary heritage. Their quotidian acts of resistance – encompassing the preservation of traditional dishes, the adaptation of techniques, and the nurturing of a sense of continuity – serve to reveal the way food functions as a medium for healing, identity preservation, and cultural reconstruction in periods of disruption. Consequently, the development of future recovery policies must incorporate culinary and cultural resilience strategies, acknowledging food not only as a source of sustenance but also as a fundamental element in the process of emotional and communal reconstruction.

Research limitations and recommendations for future studies

This study is limited to qualitative interviews conducted with 25 women who either remained in or migrated from Hatay following the earthquakes of February 6, 2023. The relatively small sample size restricts the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, the research exclusively focuses on women's perspectives, thereby excluding the roles of men, children, and younger generations in the transformation of culinary culture. Most interviews were conducted within the first year following the disaster, which limits the ability to assess long-term changes. Although the participants varied in terms of socioeconomic background, educational status, and the regions to which they migrated, the representation of certain demographic groups remains limited.

*Future research would benefit from comparative studies based on variables such as age groups, eth*nic and religious affiliations, or the cultural characteristics of the regions to which participants have migrated. In addition, mixed-method approaches that integrate both qualitative and quantitative techniques could offer a more comprehensive understanding of the transformation in culinary practices. Finally, future studies may explore the influence of post-disaster social policies and local government initiatives on the preservation and revitalization of gastronomic heritage.

Author Contribution

Conceptualization: Nurhayat İflazoğlu; Data curation: Nurhayat İflazoğlu, Beyda Okur; Formal analysis: Nurhayat İflazoğlu; Research: Nurhayat İflazoğlu, Beyda Okur; Methodology: Nurhayat İflazoğlu, Beyda Okur; Resources: Nurhayat İflazoğlu, Beyda Okur; Software:

Nurhayat İflazoğlu, Beyda Okur; Supervision Nurhayat İflazoğlu; Validation: Nurhayat İflazoğlu; Visualization: Nurhayat İflazoğlu; Writing – original draft: Nurhayat İflazoğlu, Beyda Okur; Writing review & editing: Nurhayat İflazoğlu

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