

DEVELOPING NEW PRODUCT AND BRINGING IT TO TOURISM VIA GEOGRAPHICALLY INDICATED LOCAL TASTES OF NEVŞEHİR



Project Leader
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INTRODUCTION

Gastronomy culture is an important cultural heritage that contributes to tourism by preserving local culinary values. While local cuisines are at risk of disappearing with globalization, geographically indicated products play a key role in protecting and promoting this heritage. Turkey has a great potential in this field with its rich gastronomic heritage. Nevşehir attracts attention in terms of gastronomy tourism with its geographically indicated products such as pumpkin seeds, köftür and pottery kebab.

Developing new gastronomic products with local products strengthens regional promotion and provides economic benefits. In order to overcome the lack of souvenirs in Nevşehir, creating new touristic products from geographically indicated products both increases the value of the region and contributes to gastronomy tourism. This project aims to develop new gastronomic products using geographically indicated local products, highlight these products as a tourist attraction, and contribute to the regional economy. Its main objectives include promoting local products, supporting local producers, creating new employment opportunities, increasing women's participation in the workforce, and ensuring the sustainability of cultural heritage through preservation. Within the scope of the project, the geographically indicated foods and beverages of Nevşehir were examined, recipes identified through sensory analysis were developed and promotional activities were carried out. In addition, training and marketing activities for women's cooperatives, business chefs and the tourism sector were carried out to ensure the transfer of regional gastronomic heritage to future generations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the first phase of the project, the geographically indicated products of the Cappadocia region have been identified, and a detailed literature review has been conducted. During this process, products that align with the region's history, culture, and natural structure have been analyzed, and products with geographical indications or those in the application stage have been evaluated. In addition to the 7 registered geographical indication products in Nevşehir, 7 products in the application stage and 7 potential products have been identified. During the development phase of new gastronomic products, products such as Derinkuyu strawberries and Kaymaklı dried cream were not preferred due to seasonal and shelf life issues. Instead, it was decided to use pumpkin seeds, köftür, and molasses. Four different cookie recipes have been developed using the selected geographically indicated products. In these recipes, local flavors have been combined with modern gastronomic techniques. The recipes were coded (101, 201, 301, 401) and prepared with different combinations, followed by a sensory analysis using the Ranking Test. In the evaluations conducted by trained panelists based on appearance, aroma, texture, flavor, and overall preference criteria, the two most favored recipes (coded 301 and 401) were determined. Then, a Hedonic Scale Test was applied, and these two recipes were evaluated by 113 untrained consumer panelists. As a result, it was found that the recipe coded 401 received the highest scores in terms of texture, flavor, and overall preference. In the next phase of the project, extensive promotional activities were carried out to introduce the developed products to tourism.

- Introduction to Women's Cooperatives and Businesses: The product was introduced to women's cooperatives and tourism businesses, with the aim of being added to restaurant menus and used in coffee and tea services.
- Social Media and Branding Efforts: A brand named "Cappacookies" was created, and social media accounts were set up for product promotion. Video and photo shoots were used as promotional materials.
- Meeting with Young Chefs: At events organized by the Faculty of Tourism at Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University, a booth was set up to introduce the product to culinary students.

““ CONCLUSIONS (FINDINGS) AND DISCUSSION ””

This project aims to develop high value-added new gastronomic products using Nevşehir's geographically indicated local products and introduce these products to tourism. The process, which began with identifying geographically indicated products, has led to the development of new gastronomic souvenirs using Nevşehir's regional products, addressing the lack of gastronomic souvenirs in the region. This approach is aligned with the goals of Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University's Natural and Cultural Heritage Tourism Specialization Strategy, aiming to contribute to the sustainability of cultural and natural heritage and the economic development of the local community. Within the scope of the project:

- **Product Development Process:** Four different cookie recipes were developed using the geographically indicated products of the region (pumpkin seeds, cumin, and molasses). These products were evaluated using the Ranking Test and the Hedonic Scale Test. As a result of evaluations by trained panelists, the two most favored recipes were identified, and final tests were conducted by a consumer group of 113 participants. The recipe coded 401 received the highest scores in terms of flavor, texture, and overall preference, leading to the creation of its standard recipe.
 - **Promotion and Marketing Activities:** The developed product was branded under the name "Cappacookies" and introduced to women's cooperatives, hotels, restaurants, and culinary students. The product was promoted on social media platforms, and consumer awareness was increased.
 - **Support for Women's Cooperatives:** The promotions aimed to increase women's participation in economic life and support local producers. Additionally, unique products were offered to tourism businesses, contributing to the region's economy.
- The project has contributed in different areas. These contributions:
- **Economic and Social Contributions:** The project contributed to the local economy by increasing the added value of geographically indicated products and promoted social development through the support of women's cooperatives.
 - **Contributions to Tourism:** The developed product enhanced the region's gastronomic tourism potential and made a difference in the souvenir market.
 - **Sustainability and Cultural Heritage Contributions:** The preservation, promotion, and creation of new uses for geographically indicated products facilitated the transmission of cultural heritage to future generations.
- The project evaluated Nevşehir's geographically indicated products with a modern approach, creating a unique gastronomic value for the region. Planning a patent application for the developed product to the Turkish Patent and Trademark Office is of critical importance for its protection and commercialization. Implementing such projects in other regions will significantly contribute to the preservation of gastronomic diversity and the sustainability of cultural heritage.

““ RECOMMENDATIONS ””

To ensure the sustainability and success of the project, the following recommendations should be considered:

- **Digital Marketing and Promotion:** The products should be promoted through social media, gastronomy festivals, and tourist guides. Local and national promotional campaigns should be conducted to reach a wide audience.
- **Social Impact Analysis:** Social impact analyses should be conducted to evaluate the effects of the cookies on the local community, and development activities should continue based on these findings.
- **Quality Control:** Regular quality control mechanisms should be established to monitor and improve production processes, ensuring hygiene and material standards are met.
- **Market Research and New Products:** Market research should be conducted based on consumer demands, and new gastronomic products should be developed using geographically indicated products.
- **Partnerships:** Collaboration with tourism businesses, hotels, and restaurants should be established to add the products to their menus and ensure they reach tourists.
- **Training and Awareness:** Training programs should be organized for the local population and tourism sector employees, raising awareness about the importance of geographically marked products.
- **International Recognition and Export:** The products should be promoted in national and international markets, and participation in overseas fairs and events should be considered to evaluate export opportunities.
- **Environmentally Friendly Production:** Environmentally friendly methods and materials should be used in the production and packaging processes of the products.
- **Consumer Feedback:** Regular feedback should be collected to assess customer satisfaction, and improvements should be made based on this information. These strategies will help ensure the sustainability of the project and contribute to the preservation of the region's natural and cultural heritage.



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