

# Chapter 51

## Foods of Southwest Asia, The Middle East and Africa

### More Foods from Southwest Asia, The Middle East and Africa

**Directions:** Read the following selection. Then answer the questions under *Thinking Critically*, and complete the activities as directed by your teacher.

Beans and okra at breakfast; lamb with pickles for lunch. These are a few of the taste traditions of Africa and the Middle East. Foods in these regions are as diverse as the people who call these areas home.

#### Ethiopia

- ◆ **Wot.** A spicy, traditional stew typical of Ethiopian cuisine. It's prepared with doro (chicken), sik sik (beef), fish, or vegetables cooked in berberé. Shiro wot (vegetable stew) is commonly eaten during religious feasts.
- ◆ **Alecha.** A mild-flavored chicken or beef stew.
- ◆ **Injera.** A thin, soft flatbread that is cooked on a griddle. It's customarily used to scoop up and wrap food.
- ◆ **Niter kebbeh.** A golden butter that is clarified and flavored with garlic, onions, ginger, and other spices. Along with berberé, it's an essential of Ethiopian cooking.

#### Nigeria

- ◆ **Obe egusi.** A popular soup of meat, dried fish, and ground melon seeds. It's yellow-orange in color.
- ◆ **Suya.** Barbecued liver and beef cooked on skewers and served as an appetizer.
- ◆ **Akara.** Balls of dried white beans or black-eyed peas, ground, spiced, and dropped by spoonfuls into a frying pan. Okra or cheese may be added. A side dish, it's usually eaten at breakfast.
- ◆ **Moyin-moyin.** Ground ewa (beans) steamed with tomatoes, peppers, meat, vegetables, eggs, and spices. It can be served alone or with rice. At breakfast, it's often accompanied by ogi (ground cooked corn).

- ◆ **Dolma.** A main dish that can be served hot or cold. For hot dolmas, minced meat and herbs are stuffed into vegetables, such as tomatoes, eggplant, and bell peppers, or wrapped in cabbage and vine leaves. Cold dolmas are stuffed with rice.
- ◆ **Kebab.** Plain or marinated lamb or other meat that is stewed or grilled, often between chunks of tomato or green pepper. Doner kebab is a popular lunch of lamb roasted on a vertical spit, sliced thinly, and served in rolls with pickles and chips (French fries).
- ◆ **Borek.** Paper-thin pastry, called yufka, wrapped around or layered with cheese, spinach, chopped meat, or potatoes; it is fried, baked, grilled, or boiled. According to tradition, a woman should master the art of making borek before getting married.
- ◆ **Kadayif.** A sweet borek filled with pistachio nuts, walnuts, or cream. One variation is tel kadayif, dried pastry threads cooked on a griddle, then shaped and sweetened with syrup.

#### Yemen

- ◆ **Salta.** The national dish; a spicy stew cooked with chicken or lamb plus lentils, chickpeas, beans, and spices, and served over rice.
- ◆ **Ruti.** Traditional bread used to scoop up food.
- ◆ **Bint al sahn.** A dessert of sweetened bread dipped in honey and butter.
- ◆ **Shay.** A popular tea served in small glasses, with or without milk and often flavored with mint.

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## Thinking Critically

1. What are your favorite African or Middle Eastern foods? How have they become part of your cultural food experiences?

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2. What grains are similar to couscous? In what way(s) are these grains used in recipes or meal plans?

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3. What unfamiliar food from the African or Middle Eastern diet would you like to try? Explain why.

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4. What impact has the food from Africa and the Middle East had on your diet? Explain why you believe this food has made an impact.

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## For Further Study

- ◆ Create a Venn diagram of two or more intersecting circles. Compare the similarities of foods or meals of two or more countries in this chapter. Write a summary about your comparison and submit it to your teacher.
- ◆ Make a chart of food dishes that are similar across cultures or countries. For example, dumplings: gnocchi, pierogis; fatayer, pasty, or pita bread; and cabbage rolls or grape leaves. Label the country, and match the food dish that is similar. Display your chart, and share it with your class. Why do you think there are so many similarities? What does this tell you about food cultures and traditions?
- ◆ Trace a food, such as rice, lamb, pork, or eggplant, across cultures or countries. What is the most common use of the food? What is the most uncommon use? Compare the use(s) of these foods from various cultures to similar uses that are part of your food culture. What conclusions can you make? Discuss your thoughts with the class.