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TRADITIONAL MEAT PRODUCTS IN ALGERIA: HISTORY, PREPARATION AND CONSUMPTION

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Ethnic meat products are traditionally, culturally and commercially the most valuable food products in different countries throughout the world. This can be due to their particular sensory properties, high nutritional quality and natural composition. Furthermore, the particularity of ethnic meat products is their close connection to the culture, heritage and the local identity of the concerned countries. Traditional meat processing uses numerous ancestral techniques including salting, curing, drying, smoking, heating and fermentation. In Algeria, numerous traditional meat products exist since the highest antiquity. Many of them are prepared only in restricted geographical areas and consumed locally during local events, family celebrations or religious feasts. The main objectives of this scientific survey were to report the traditional knowledge that covers the origin, preparation, characteristics, and consumption habits of the Algerian traditional meat products. Nineteen (19) most known Algerian traditional meat products namely *Melfouf*, *Merguez*, *Kofta*, *Guedid*, *Cured Guedid*, *El messli*, *Kourdass*, *Fregate*, *Merdouma/ Bourdim*, *Tafra-gara*, *Maynama*, *Khliaa Ezir*, *Laknaf*, *Osbana*, *Mcharmila*, *Boubnit*,

Bouzelouf/Zelif, Douara/Bekbouka and Cachir were documented. Moreover, these products were grouped into 5 categories using both traditional and scientific knowledge related to their preparation. The identified categories are i) salted and/or marinated meat products but not dried; ii) dried not fermented meat products; iii) fermented semi dry/dried meat products; iv) smoked meat products and v) cooked and/or candied meat products. The common eating practices of these products and the related historical and socio-cultural aspects were also discussed.

Keywords: Ethnic meat products; traditional preparation; cultural practices; Algeria.
