

CHAPTER 4

Food, nutrition, and health in Albania

Diola Dosti¹, Orana Sinani² and Indrit Tila^{2,3}

¹Culinary Institute Neranxi, Tirana, Albania

²Chef, Tirana, Albania

³Chef, Tirana, Albania; First “Vegan Conference” in Albania, Tirana, Albania

4.1 Introduction and historical overview

Despite the various foods brought from around the world to Albanian tables, from Italian pasta to sushi, traditional Albanian dishes not only remain in high demand by the local population, but are also appreciated by tourists. Several factors have contributed to the formation of the Albanian cuisine as it is known today. These include the geographical position of the country and the cultural customs and traditions that have formed over the centuries as a result of waves of invaders. Historically, the Albanians' territory has been administered by various states, such as Rome, Byzantium, Serbia, Venice, several other “ephemeral authorities present on the territory,” and Turkey, which have left their mark on the culture of the local population (Sawicka, 2013). The present-day Albanians have inhabited the territory since the Paleolithic Age. Ancient South Illyrians and possibly some other ancient Balkan populations like the Thracians are commonly considered to be the ancestors of today's Albanians (Sulcebe & Shyti, 2016). During the 2nd century BCE until the 3rd century CE, the territory of today's Albania was part of the Roman Empire and later of the Byzantine Empire. Other invasions followed, with those of the Slavic populations (i.e., Bulgarians and then Serbians) in the 7th century, and of the Ottoman Empire in the 14th century that has lasted until the beginning of the 20th century (Sulcebe & Shyti, 2016). “Albania was—and still is—in many ways oriental. It is a country still showing the signs of nearly 400 years of Ottoman occupation” (Danemark, 1993). After gaining its independence in 1912, Albania has not experienced thereafter any major population mixtures (Sulcebe & Shyti, 2016). For almost half of the 20th century, Albania remained completely isolated from the rest of the world. During the communist period (i.e., 1946–91), locals of different ethnic or religious groups living in Albania were working in state cooperatives, possibly exchanging traditional knowledge and practices (Pieroni, 2017). Subsequently, the cuisine has developed mostly inside family kitchens. It was not until 2011–13 when chefs, food editors, and restaurateurs became aware of the separation from the culinary roots and started to research old culinary traditions. Thereafter, a trend was formed that contributed to shaping today's society in which people are more conscious of their past and their roots.

4.2 Geography and the natural agricultural landscape

Albania is a small country on the Adriatic and Ionian seas with a mountainous landscape. It covers an area of 28,748 km². According to the country's Institute of Statistics, on January 1, 2020 the country had 2,845,955 million inhabitants (INSTAT, 2020).

The diverse and complex relief of the country is the main factor influencing agriculture. Although Albania has fertile soils, the total arable land is finite, occupying a quarter (i.e., approximately 700,000 ha) of the country's total land area. Moreover, Albania's agricultural landscape is highly fragmented: the western coastal region (occupying approximately 250,000 ha) has the best soils for intensive agriculture, while in the north east and to a limited extent in the south east, approximately 60,000–90,000 ha of soils are acidic, reducing crop yields. Crops are mainly cultivated along the coastal region and the interior valleys. Hilly areas, occupying approximately 220,000 ha, are used for vineyards, olive groves, and fruit trees. The land at higher elevations is used as pastures. The mountain areas cover approximately 80,000 ha and are characterized by steep slopes and severe climatic conditions (Zdruli, 2003; Zdruli & Lushaj, 2001).

The country's climate conditions are of Mediterranean type, characterized by warm and dry summers, and mild and wet winters. The strategic location in the Balkans, especially the proximity to the Mediterranean Sea, has a decisive influence on the Albanian cuisine. The country's common foods are olives, wheat, chickpeas, dairy products, fish, fruits, and vegetables. Onion is the country's most widely used ingredient (Jay, 2016). Albania was ranked sixth in the world in 2015 in terms of onion consumption (i.e., 33.3 kg per capita) (Helgi Library, 2020). The territory of Albania allows for a variety of food products to be grown, including typical Mediterranean citrus fruits like oranges and lemons, figs, and olives.

Olive plantations, occupying 41,000 ha, cover 6.3% of the total arable land. Olive oil is the oldest type of vegetable fat that has been commonly used in Albanian cooking since ancient times. It is produced since antiquity throughout the country, particularly along the coastline. "Olive lop are stamped in stones and coins of the Illyrian tribes" (Velo & Topi, 2017). Albania owns 22 native olive cultivars, according to genetic studies. The country has an income of 16 million Euros from the olive sector with a capacity to produce 50,000 tons of olive fruits and 6000 tons of olive oil annually (Velo & Topi, 2017). Albania has also one of Europe's longest viticulture histories, being one of the few places where vines were naturally grown during the ice age. The oldest seeds found in the region are between 4000 and 6000 years old (Stevenson, 2011).

In 2019, 37.8% of the population was active in the agricultural sector (STATISTA, 2020). The reforms implemented in recent years have transformed Albania into an upper-middle-income country (World Bank, 2020).

4.3 Food culture, eating habits, and traditions

Albanians like to eat and they like to share the food. A fundamental custom that characterizes the Balkan region, including the Albanian society, is the hospitality of its inhabitants. Serving food to guests and visitors is an integral part of the region's hospitality and food culture. The custom is a remnant of the traditional medieval Albanian code of honor, namely "besa." According to this code, looking after guests, visitors, and strangers is considered an act of recognition and gratitude (Sadiku, 2014). Another significant cultural tradition, which is part of the Albanian lifestyle, is the consumption of coffee. According to the 2016 INSTAT survey, Albania has more coffee shops per capita than any other country in the world. A coffee here costs on average between 60 and 80 cents, being among the cheapest worldwide (Oculus News, 2018).

Albanians' eating habits are rapidly changing due to time constraints, irregular working schedules, and urbanization. Although most people have three meals a day (i.e., breakfast, lunch, and dinner), the number of the population that skips breakfast and chooses take-away over home-cooked dishes is increasing (FAO, 2008). The Albanian diet is typical for the Balkan region. It is based on fresh fruits and vegetables that are in season, as well as on cereals like wheat and maize, potatoes, and vegetable oil. Milk and eggs are also consumed; 818 g/day per capita were consumed during 2000–02. During the same period, Albanians consumed 103 g/day per capita of meat and meat products, while fish and seafood were consumed only sparingly (11 g/day per capita). Furthermore, the population discriminates between the type of meat for religious considerations (e.g., pork meat is not consumed by the Muslim population). Eating habits are also different among the urban and rural population. While rural consumers have a diet based on fresh farm products, urban consumers must rely sometimes on processed foods, such as frozen and preserved fruits and vegetables (FAO, 2008).

4.4 Typical foods and food products

Located between sea and land, Albania has a variety of food products and dishes that vary from region to region. There is currently a debate to clarify what is traditional Albanian cuisine and what is authentic Albanian cuisine. This needs to be further researched, mainly locally. Many old cooking traditions have contributed to the formation of the local traditional cuisine. Typical Albanian products are: (1) dairy products (e.g., "mazë," "mishavin," and "salcë shakulli"), (2) vegetable based preserved pickles (e.g., "turshi patlixhani"), (3) fruit based products (e.g., "gliko"); (4) fish-based dishes (e.g., "Tava e Krapit," "Tava e Koranit"); (5) the typical Albanian lamb dish (e.g., "Elbasan Tava"); (6) cornmeal-based product (e.g., "Bukë në voter"); (7) dough-based products (e.g., "flija," "jufka," "petka," "byrek," "Lakror in saç," and "trahana"), and (8) the unique oregano brandy (e.g., "rakia e rigonit").

4.4.1 Dairy products

4.4.1.1 “Mazë” and “mishavin”

The dairy production, being one of the oldest traditions in the highest regions of Albania, comes with an extensive production of milk, yogurt, butter, cheese, and “mazë.” The procedure of making “mazë” is specific and typical for the northern Albanian tradition. This dairy product is made from cow, sheep, or goat milk, sometimes from a mixture of three of them. The fresh milk is boiled, mixed with a small amount of salt, and then left to ferment in a warm environment (i.e., around 20°C). After natural fermentation, the resulted clear cream that separates on top of the product is called “mazë.”

The remaining part, the curd, is used to make “mishavin” cheese. First, the curd is cut into thick strips, which are then covered in a cloth and lightly pressed so that the whey is removed. Then, the cheese obtained is cut into large pieces, which are then left for up to 10 days to dry in the open air, protected from the sun. Finally, after the cheese is finely crushed by hand and salted, it is left to age. The aging process takes place in a wooden container that has holes on the bottom to allow the whey to drain, while the top is protected by a thick layer of melted, sometimes clarified, butter. After around 2 months, “mishavin” is ready to be consumed ([Slow Food, n.d.a](#)).

4.4.1.2 “Salcë shakulli”

“Salcë shakulli” is a traditional product made from drained yogurt that is aged in a salted animal (i.e., sheep or goat) skin sack. It is a characteristic product of mountain pastures in the Përmet region of Southern Albania, particularly Dhëmbel, Nemërckë, Postenan, and Trebeshinë. Shepherds from this region have discovered this method, allowing them to conserve yogurt for longer periods. “Salcë shakulli” is little known outside the Përmet region, which limits its presence on the markets. Its availability is also hindered by the declining number of producers, as there are fewer and fewer shepherds who graze their flocks on the pastures of the high mountains. Moreover, the new hygiene rules that Albania has adopted to comply with the EU regulations have made it impossible for such local products to access the market ([Slow Food, n.d.b](#)).

4.4.2 Vegetable based preserved pickles

The territory allowed the Albanians to develop a seasonally way of eating. Pickles are served all around the country and have become a necessity during the winter as a way to preserve all the harvest that came from the fields. Tomatoes, cabbage, eggplant, carrots, cucumber, and peppers are among the most used vegetables for preservation. The pickling method is usually a tradition performed by women in early fall, during the month of September.

4.4.2.1 “Turshi patllixhani”

“Turshi patllixhani” (meaning “pickled eggplant” in Albanian) is an unusual type of pickles widely prepared for home consumption. It refers specifically to pickled eggplants. Eggplants used for this preservation method are unripe. After washing, cutting them lengthwise, and boiling in salted water until they begin to soften, the eggplants are then drained and hollowed out. Their flesh is chopped into small pieces and mixed with salt, garlic, parsley, peppers, and any other vegetables, and used as a filling mixture for the hollowed-out eggplants. These are placed over grape leaves and left to ferment for 21 days in a wooden container filled with salt and oil. “Turshi patllixhani” is part of the Albanian pastoral tradition, as the method of preservation allows the storage and consumption of eggplants when needed, especially during long winters. Other unripe vegetables, such as green tomatoes, can also be used to prepare “turshi.” These artisanal products are commercially available in Albanian markets, but their existence is at risk due to the growth of the pickle industry, which produces copies that lack the quality attributes and techniques that make “turshi” authentic ([Slow Food, n.d.c](#)).

4.4.3 Fruit based products: “Gliko”

“Gliko” is a compote obtained from locally grown whole fruits in the Përmet valley by small-scale farmers. It is considered an important element of the local cuisine, being offered to guests or consumed on special occasions. It is similar to “slatko,” which is consumed among the Slavic speaking communities from the Balkan region. The method of production varies with type of “gliko.” Walnut husk “gliko” obtained from whole green walnuts is the most common. Other popular variations include “gliko” made with white cherry, wild fig, plum, and apricot. In the first step, the carefully selected fruits are left for one hour and twenty minutes to soak in cold water mixed with lime. When the fruits become firm and resistant, sugar is added, and the mixture is boiled for one hour in a traditional copper pot over an open fire flame, occasionally adding lemon to maintain the bright color of the fruits. At the end, when the syrup has been absorbed by the fruits, “gliko” is left to cool and then is placed in glass jars. Although this traditional product is prepared by many families, only three of them have turned this into a professional enterprise ([Slow Food, n.d.d](#)).

4.4.4 Fish based products

4.4.4.1 “Tava e Krapit”

“Tava e Krapit” is the most symbolic dish of the city of Shkodra, the cultural center of the northern region of Albania. This city is located in the outflow of the Shkodra lake into the Buna river. In this area, the fish is very abundant, so the signature dish of Shkodran families is the fish casserole made with caramelized onions and carp fish found

in the Shkodra lake. This ethnic, but yet autochthonous dish, is cooked in a clay dish. It is made with “Nerdenin” (a tomato sauce cooked slowly), sour plums, and bay leaves, and has an exquisite flavor.

4.4.4.2 “Tava e Koranit”

“Tava e Koranit” is another fish based dish that is typical for the Pogradec area. The dish is prepared with fresh wild trout (*Salmo letnica*), which grows in the Pogradec lake and it is known by Albanians under the name of koran (Agroweb, 2017a; Bakiu & Durmishaj, 2018). Koran is unique in the world; it is renowned for its taste, nutritional values, and health benefits (Agroweb, 2017a).

4.4.5 Lamb-based products: “Elbasan Tava”

“Elbasan Tava,” a lamb and yogurt casserole, is an ethnic Albanian dish. It was borrowed by the Turkish cuisine where it is known by the same name. The history of the dish dates back to the middle of the 15th century, after the Ottomans’ attempt to attack and siege the city of Kruja. Sultan Mehmed II created and built a military encampment for his army to be prepared for the following attacks. This military camp was built in the area of today’s Elbasan city. After Mehmed II occupied this region, he found to particularly enjoy this casserole dish made with lamb and yogurt. Sometimes, the yogurt used for this dish came from goats or sheep milk. Nowadays in Albania the dish is simply called “tavë kosi,” but in Turkey or other former countries under the Ottoman Empire it is known as “Elbasan Tava” (Roepers, 2020).

4.4.6 Cornmeal based product: “Bukë në voter”

“Bukë në voter” is an old recipe for baking homemade cornbread (“bukë misri” in Albanian or “bukë kollomoqi” in the local dialect) that is specific to the inhabitants from the Kelmend region in northern Albania. It is made with corn flour obtained from locally cultivated yellow (“kollomoq i verdhë”) or white (“kollomoq i bardhë”) corn. The dough prepared with hot water is round-shaped, placed over a hot stone, and covered with an iron lid. Then the embers of the fire are put on top of the lid for approximately 45 min. Finally, the backed cornbread can be immersed in brine (“shëllirë”), which is used to store cheese, to soften it and make it tastier. Today, few elderly people know to use this traditional way of baking. Another custom of the members of this Catholic community was for women to draw a cross on bread, which is considered a God’s gift (Slow Food, n.d.e).

4.4.7 Dough based products

4.4.7.1 *Flija*

“Flija” is another authentic Albanian dish that has been passed down through generations. It is made from dough obtained by mixing flour, water, and salt, which is then layered in the form of crepes. Each layer is brushed with cream (“mazë”). “Flija” is traditionally baked over an open fire in a large baking tin, which is then covered with a conical-shaped lid. The bell-shaped lid is then covered with hot embers. This baked layer of crepes in “mazë” is traditionally prepared in the northern regions of Albania, as well as in north east, but with some differences in the style of its preparation. Here, it is traditionally made from many layers of precooked crepes and, instead of “mazë,” butter is used. The topic of the authenticity of “Flija” was discussed at the Pristina Gastronomy Festival in 2019.

4.4.7.2 “Jufka” or “Juka Dibre”

“Jufka” or “Juka Dibre” is a traditional handmade pasta specific to the north east part of Dibra. It is similar in shape with the Italian “tagliatelle.” The dough is made from fresh milk, eggs, whole durum wheat (*Triticum durum*) flour, and salt. It is left to naturally ferment in a dry place for 1–5 days, then it is rolled out, and cut into thin, ribbon-shaped noodles. After drying, the noodles are stored in bags, or wooden or paper boxes (Slow Food, n.d.f).

“Jufka” is used during the winter season and it is typically prepared with free-range chicken eggs, brown butter on top, and served with thyme. Cooking is a tradition of every house in Dibra—it is a family reunion, where the whole family gathers together to produce good quality and quantity of food to have and enjoy over the years. The origin of this product, which is believed to be of Ottoman origin like most dishes in the Albanian and Balkan cuisine, is controversial. “Jufka” is also possible to have come from the Albanians (i.e., the Arbëreshë community) living in the south of Italy since 1480s (Slow Food, n.d.f). This fact would make “Jufka” an ethnic Albanian product.

4.4.7.3 “Petka”

“Petka” is another traditional pasta typical for the Korça region. It is prepared from dried and shredded dough that is made with local eggs and flour.

4.4.7.4 “Byrek” and “Lakror in saç”

“Byrek,” “Lakror,” “Petanik,” and “Rrethanik” are all different names that a “byrek” gets wherever it is cooked in Albania. “Byrek” is the most known Albanian homemade dish. One type of “byrek,” which is authentic for the Korça region, is “Lakror in saç” (meaning “pie in copper pan” in Albanian). It is a two-layered filled pie sprinkled with butter.

The filling can vary from meat, tomatoes, spinach, potatoes, beans, cheese, to pumpkin. The preparation of this dish, whose taste is quite distinctive, has been passed down from generation to generation.

4.4.7.5 “Trahana”

“Trahana” is a derivative product of all the above mentioned dough based specialties. It is prepared from a dough that is left to ferment and then it is dried. “Trahana” is typically used as a powder for thickening soups, but it is also traditionally served as a breakfast. It is renowned for its health benefits imparted by fermentation.

4.4.8 Oregano brandy: “rakia e rignonit”

Oregano brandy is one of the most unique and ancient traditional drinks made in the Përmet area in Southern Albania. This drink is prepared from wild white oregano that grows in this area and is one of the area’s most sought-after souvenirs. “Rakia e rignonit” requires a lot of preparation time. It is obtained from 50 L of water and 10–15 kg of oregano that are placed in a wooden barrel. After two or three days, the white oregano begins to ferment, a process that is easily noticeable. The liquid is mixed regularly over the days until it forms bubbles. This process takes about 10 days. After fermentation is complete, the mixture is ready for the usual process of preparing the brandy. Oregano brandy undergoes a single fermentation process. This traditional drink was usually consumed during the winter season and was used to cure respiratory problems. It is mainly prepared in small quantities throughout the province of Dangëlli. It is not available on the market, being prepared only for home use. The color is transparent, but not infrequently the caramelized yellow color is encountered as a separate specialty. The traditional method of producing oregano brandy seems to be on the verge of extinction, due to demographic changes and migration. The younger generations have lost interest in preparing this distinctive drink, while those who have not forgotten the craft of this wild herb brandy have dwindled in number ([Agroweb, 2017b](#)).

4.5 Present nutritional conditions

Albanian typical food and food products forming the country’s cuisine fall within the category of the “Mediterranean diet,” which includes a high consumption of carbohydrates, vegetables, fruits, and olive oil. The nutrients gained from this traditional Albanian diet are perceived as the main contributors to the nation’s high adult life expectancy ([Gjonca & Bobak, 1997](#)). Life expectancy in Albania has increased to 76.4 years in 2016, from 70.0 years in the 1980s, and this was linked to the traditional Mediterranean dietary pattern characterized by high consumption of fruits and vegetables ([Hyska, Burazeri, Menza, & Dupouy, 2020](#)). However, processed foods with high sugar, salt, and saturated fats are gradually replacing many components of this traditional Mediterranean diet ([Hyska et al., 2020](#)). Many children in Albania subsist on an unhealthy diet and have a poor nutritional

status (Hyska et al., 2020). Despite Albania's progress in recent decades in terms of economic growth, poverty reduction, improved agricultural and agroindustrial production, there are many families that face food insecurity and live in poverty (Hyska et al., 2020). Inadequate nutrition, unsafe drinking water, poor hygiene, and limited access to health systems are the country's main contributors to illness (de Soto, Gordon, Gedeshi, & Sinoimeri, 2002). According to the Public Health Institute within the Ministry of Health, which collates regional data on foodborne diseases and their impact on human health, the country has annually approximately 56,000 cases of gastrointestinal illness (i.e., approximately 2000 cases per 100,000 population) and approximately 2800 cases of food poisoning (i.e., approximately 100 cases per 100,000 population). The etiology behind these cases is rarely investigated. Likewise, apart from infection with *Entamoeba histolytica*, parasitic, or viral infections are not part of routine surveillance (Lake et al., 2015). Approximately 20%–30% of the population does not have access to primary health care, especially in rural areas (Lake et al., 2015).

Malnutrition was identified as a national priority. Currently, the country faces a triple burden of malnutrition in children: 17% of children suffer from iron-deficiency anemia, 16% are overweight and obese, and 11% of children under the age of five suffer from stunting (Hyska et al., 2020). Diarrheal diseases are the second cause of death among children of age below 5 years (Fabiana et al., 2007). In 2016, dietary risks were reported to account for 28.9% of the total mortality rate and for approximately 15% of the total burden of disease (Hyska et al., 2020). As a consequence, in 2010 a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Food and Nutrition was formulated and signed by the five line ministries in Albania (i.e., the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection, the Ministry of Labor, Social Assistance and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Education and Science, and the Ministry of Finance) with the aim to improve the nutritional situation of the population. Following this governmental document, the Albanian Food and Nutrition Action Plan for 2013–20 was developed. The Plan has as objectives to: (1) improve the food, health and nutrition of Albanian schoolchildren; (2) increase agriculture potential at the local level; (3) increase women's access to entrepreneurship, support services, resources, and markets; (4) increase the network of local markets for agricultural products; (5) improve management of agricultural enterprises; (6) build the capacity of the local private sector; (7) support small-scale farmers to supply food that is locally produced; and (8) improve access of all Albanians to food that is adequate, nutritious, and safe (Hyska et al., 2020).

4.6 Concluding remarks

In Albania, research regarding the characteristics of traditional foods is in its infancy stage. Traditional foods are not only an important part of the Albanian culture, but also part of everyday cuisine, contributing to the population's health. Practices related

to their preparation are deeply embedded in the local history and environment. These have evolved during centuries of interactions between local communities and their environment, taking advantage of the country's fertile land, proximity to the sea, and the mountainous terrain. However, many of the artisanal skills and traditional knowledge are at risk of disappearing. The current generations have the mission to preserve the local craft and uniqueness of traditional foods for the future. Further studies should document old food preparations, their history, and nutritional composition, as well as their potential to be registered under the European quality schemes, such as the protected designation of origin, protected geographical indication, and traditional specialties guaranteed. The registration of products in these schemes can contribute to the competitiveness of the Albanian food sector with opportunities to access global markets, while supporting local communities.

References

- Agroweb. (2017a, August 4). *Korani i Pogradecit në Pjatën e Mbretëreshës Elisabet*. Retrieved from <<http://agroweb.org/archive/?m=t&id=10&l=2992>>. (In Albanian).
- Agroweb. (2017b, August 20). *Albanian Oregano Raki – From Permet with love*. Retrieved from <<https://www.agroweb.news/main-news/albanian-oregano-raki-from-permet-with-love/>>. (In Albanian).
- Bakiu, R., & Durmishaj, S. (2018). Aquaponics as promising tool on rearing Ohrid Lake trout (*Salmo letnica*) for conserving the wild individuals and generating incomes. *Progress in Aqua Farming and Marine Biology*, 1(1), 1–12.
- Danemark, B. (1993). Post-war urban and regional development in Albania. *Habitat International*, 17(2), 73–90.
- de Soto, H., Gordon, P., Gedeshi, I., & Sinoimeri, Z. (2002). *Poverty in Albania: A Qualitative Assessment no. 520*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- Fabiana, A., Donia, D., Gabrieli, R., Petrinca, A. R., Cenko, F., Bebeci, D., ... Maurizio Divizia, M. (2007). Influence of enteric viruses on gastroenteritis in Albania: Epidemiological and molecular analysis. *Journal of Medical Virology*, 79, 1844–1849.
- FAO. (2008). *The food supply and distribution system of Tirana, Albania*. Retrieved from <<http://www.fao.org/3/ap296e/ap296e.pdf>>.
- Gjonca, A., & Bobak, M. (1997). Albanian paradox, another example of protective effect of Mediterranean lifestyle? *The Lancet*, 350(9094), 1815–1817.
- Helgi Library. (2020). *Onion consumption per capita by country*. Retrieved from <helgilibrary.com>.
- Hyska, J., Burazeri, G., Menza, V., & Dupouy, E. (2020). Assessing nutritional status and nutrition-related knowledge, attitudes and practices of Albanian schoolchildren to support school food and nutrition policies and programmes. *Food Policy*. (In Press). Retrieved from <<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2020.101888>>.
- INSTAT. (2020). *Population of Albania*. Retrieved from <http://www.instat.gov.al/media/6850/population-on-1-january-2020___pdf>.
- Jay, M. (2016). *Onions and garlic: A global history*. London, UK: Reaktion Books Ltd.
- Lake, R. J., Devleeschauwer, B., Nasinyama, G., Havelaar, A. H., Kuchenmüller, T., ... Speybroeck, N. (2015). *PLoS One*, 10(12), 1–10.
- Oculus News. (2018). *Albania ranked first in the World for the number of Bars and Restaurants per inhabitant*. Retrieved from <<https://www.ocnal.com/2018/02/albania-ranked-first-in-world-for.html>>.
- Pieron, A. (2017). Traditional uses of wild food plants, medicinal plants, and domestic remedies in Albanian, Aromanian and Macedonian villages in South-Eastern Albania. *Journal of Herbal Medicine*, 9, 81–90.

- Roepers, C. (2020). *Tave Kosi a timeless Albanian favorite to stand the rest of the time*. *Arousing Appetites.com*. Retrieved from <<https://blog.arousingappetites.com/tave-kosi-albanian-lamb-yogurt-casserole/>>.
- Sadiku, M. (2014). A tradition of honor, hospitality and blood feuds: Exploring the Kanun customary law in contemporary Albania. *Balkan Social Science Review*, 3, 93–115.
- Sawicka, I. (2013). A crossroad between west, east and orient – The case of Albanian culture. *Colloquia Humanistica*, 2, 97–112.
- Slow Food. (n.d.a). *Mishavinë*. *Albania/milk and milk products*. Retrieved from <<https://www.fondazione-slowfood.com/en/slow-food-presidia/mishavin/>>.
- Slow Food. (n.d.b). *Salcë Shakulli*. Retrieved from <<https://www.fondazione-slowfood.com/en/ark-of-taste-slow-food/salce-shakulli-yogurt-cream-in-a-sack/>>.
- Slow Food. (n.d.c). *Turshi Patlixhani*. Retrieved from <<https://www.fondazione-slowfood.com/en/ark-of-taste-slow-food/turshi-patlixhani-2/>>.
- Slow Food. (n.d.d). *Përmet Gliko*. Retrieved from <<https://www.fondazione-slowfood.com/en/slow-food-presidia/permet-gliko/>>.
- Slow Food. (n.d.e). *Bukë në Vote*. Retrieved from <<https://www.fondazione-slowfood.com/en/ark-of-taste-slow-food/combread-from-kelmed/>>.
- Slow Food. (n.d.f). *Jufka*. Retrieved from <<https://www.fondazione-slowfood.com/en/ark-of-taste-slow-food/jufka/>>.
- STATISTA. (2020). *Albania: Distribution of employment by economic sector from 2009 to 2019*. Retrieved from <<https://www.statista.com/statistics/454897/employment-by-economic-sector-in-albania/>>.
- Stevenson, T. (2011). *The Sotheby's wine encyclopedia*. London, UK: Dorling Kindersley.
- Sulcebe, G., & Shyti, E. (2016). HLA-A, -B, -C, -DRB1 and -DQB1 allele and haplotype frequencies in a population of 432 healthy unrelated individuals from Albania. *Human Immunology*, 77(8), 620–621.
- Velo, S., & Topi, D. (2017). The production potential of the olive oil from native cultivars in Albania. *International Journal of Engineering Research & Science*, 3(4), 38–43.
- World Bank. (2020, April 16). *The World Bank in Albania*. Retrieved from <<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/albania/overview>>.
- Zdruli, P. (2003). Soil survey in Albania. *European Soil Bureau Research Report*, 9, 39–45.
- Zdruli, P., & Lushaj, S. (2001). The status of soil survey in Albania and some of its major environmental findings. *Options Méditerranéennes*, 34(B), 69–87.