

Oshi palav

Oshi palav (pilaf) is a traditional highly valued dish of communities in Tajikistan which is referred to a “shohi taomho” (king of dishes). *Oshi palav* is a central and main dish of all traditional gatherings of Tajik people and is prepared in all types of social and cultural gatherings. *Palav* is cooked in different varieties at home and is served also in public restaurants and teahouse. It is host’s duty to prepare *oshi palav* when a guest arrives.

Oshi palav has a long historical root among the Tajiks and considering that the ancestors of the Tajiks. It maybe postulated that the tradition of rice growing was transferred to the ancestors of the Tajiks i.e. Sogdians and Bactrians in 2 century before the Common Era from India. It was hence developed among them since one of the main parts of their economy was agriculture.

Oshi palav is prepared from a set of ingredients such as carrot, rice, meat, oil, and onion and additional fragrant spices such saffron, cumin, black paper, lemon, including grains such as chickpea. *Oshi palav* has three-stage preparation recipe: frying the main ingeminates, preparing *zirbak* (a both in which rice is cooked), the simmering of the rice. Each of these stages has their own timing and *oshi palav* is cooked in cast iron pots.

In the course of its century long development history *oshi palav* among Tajik people has evolved different types and varieties that each is unique to the type of additional ingredients used. For example, *palavi bargitoki* (*palav* prepared using vine leaf) *oshi za’faroni* (saffron *palav*), *oshi mavizi* (raisins *palav*) and also depending on the type of meat used such as *bedona palav*





(quail palav), *murghpalav* (chicken palav) and so on. In addition depending on the regions where certain forms of palav or recipe has reached the types of palav would carry those region's name such as *oshi Uroteppa* (Urotepa palav- a region in the north Tajikistan), *oshi Uyghuri* (Uighur palav) and so on. In total there are close to 200 types of the palav prepared among Tajik people. Nowadays, the types of palav is also attached to the restaurants and canteens where they are prepared such as *oshi Tayga*- latter being a name of a restaurant in Dushanbe city or *oshi Sariosiyo* – osh prepared in the area called Sariosiyo etc.

In Tajik culture different type of the *oshi*

palav prepared for certain specific events would called after the event for which it is prepared. For example *oshi nahor* – an *osh* prepared for the early morning feast given in the weddings, *oshi tagi chodar* – *osh* which has been prepared to be eaten under the bridal curtain during the wedding or *oshi sebegaha* – *osh* prepared to commemorate the third day after the funeral etc.

Oshi palav as a nomination file in 2016 has been included on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

