Meze

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*"Mezze" redirects here. For the suburb of Damascus, see*[*Mezzeh*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mezzeh)*.*

*This article is about the selection of dishes. For the canton in France, see*[*Canton of Mèze*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canton_of_M%C3%A8ze)*. For the commune within the aforementioned canton, see [Mèze](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/M%C3%A8ze" \o "Mèze).*

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| **Meze** | |
| [A large plate of Jordanian mezze in Petra, Jordan.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Petra_metzes.jpg)  A large meze platter in [Petra](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petra), [Jordan.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jordanian_cuisine) | |
| **Variations** | Numerous |
| * [Cookbook: Meze](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Special:Search/Cookbook:_Meze) * [Media: Meze](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Special:Search/Meze) | |

**Meze** or **mezze** ([/ˈmɛzeɪ/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:IPA/English)) is a selection of small dishes served as appetizers in parts of the [Middle East](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_East), the [Balkans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkans), [Greece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece), and [North Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Africa). In some Middle Eastern and African regions where it is present, especially predominantly Muslim regions where alcohol is less common, meze is often served as a part of multi-course meals, while in Greece, Turkey, and the Balkans, they function more as snacks while drinking or talking.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meze#cite_note-1)[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meze#cite_note-Arditi-2)

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Etymology[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Meze&action=edit&section=1)]

The word is found in all the [cuisines of the former Ottoman Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_cuisine) and comes from [Persian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persian_language)  مزه (*maze*) "taste, snack" < *mazīdan* "to taste".[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meze#cite_note-3)

Common dishes[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Meze&action=edit&section=2)]

In Turkey, meze often consist of *[beyaz peynir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beyaz_peynir" \o "Beyaz peynir)* (literally "white cheese"), *kavun* (sliced ripe [melon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melon))[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meze#cite_note-Arditi-2), *acılı ezme* (hot pepper paste often with walnuts), *[haydari](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haydari" \o "Haydari)* (thick strained yogurt with herbs), *patlıcan salatası* (cold [eggplant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eggplant) salad), *beyin salatası* ([brain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brain_(food)) salad), *kalamar tava* (fried [calamari](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calamari) or [squid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squid)), [midye dolma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stuffed_mussels" \o "Stuffed mussels) and *midye tava* (stuffed or fried mussels), [enginar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enginar" \o "Enginar) ([artichokes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artichoke)), *[cacık](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cac%C4%B1k" \o "Cacık)* (yogurt with cucumber and garlic), *[pilaki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilaki" \o "Pilaki)* (foods cooked in a special sauce), [*dolma*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolma) or *[sarma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarma_(food)" \o "Sarma (food))* (rice-stuffed vine leaves or other stuffed vegetables, such as [bell peppers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_pepper)), arnavut ciğeri (a liver dish, served cold), octopus salad, and *[çiğ köfte](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%87i%C4%9F_k%C3%B6fte" \o "Çiğ köfte)* (raw meatballs with [bulgur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulgur)).

In [Greece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece), [Cyprus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyprus) and the Balkans, *mezé*, *mezés*, or *mezédhes* (plural) are small dishes, hot or cold, spicy or savory. [Seafood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seafood) dishes such as grilled [octopus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Octopus) may be included, along with salads, sliced hard-boiled eggs, garlic bread, [kalamata olives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalamata_(olive)), [fava](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Split_peas) beans, fried vegetables, [melitzanosalata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melitzanosalata" \o "Melitzanosalata)(eggplant salad), [taramosalata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taramosalata" \o "Taramosalata), fried or grilled cheeses called [saganaki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saganaki), and sheep, goat, or cow cheeses.

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Meze.jpg)

Simple Greek meze: cheese and olives ([feta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feta) cheese drizzled with [olive oil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olive_oil)and sprinkled with [oregano](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oregano), served with [kalamata olives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalamata_(olive)#Cultivars) and bread)

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nje_pjate_meze.jpg)

Meze plate in Albania

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Tzatziki_Greek_meze_or_appetizer,_also_used_as_a_sauce.jpg)

[Tzatziki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tzatziki), a popular meze in Greece

Popular meze dishes include the following.

| **Arabic** | **Greek** | **Turkish** | **Armenian** | **Image** | show**Description** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |

Other meze dishes include cheeses (like the [Halloumi cheese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halloumi_cheese), [Labneh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labneh), [Tulum cheese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tulum_cheese) or [Shanklish](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanklish" \o "Shanklish)) or meat dishes (like [Stifado](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stifado" \o "Stifado), [Afelia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afelia" \o "Afelia), [Lountza](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lountza" \o "Lountza), or [Pastrami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pastrami)), fish (like [Whitebait](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitebait), [Calamari](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calamari) or [Dag Meoushan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dag_Meoushan)), ofter served with [Flatbread](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flatbread).

In [Syria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syria), [Lebanon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lebanon) and [Cyprus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyprus), meze is often a meal in its own right. There are vegetarian, meat or fish mezes. Groups of dishes arrive at the table about 4 or 5 at a time (usually between five and ten groups). There is a set pattern to the dishes: typically olives, tahini, salad and yogurt will be followed by dishes with vegetables and eggs, then small meat or fish dishes alongside special accompaniments, and finally more substantial dishes such as whole fish or meat stews and grills. Establishments will offer their own specialities, but the pattern remains the same. Naturally the dishes served will reflect the seasons. For example, in late autumn, [snails](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Snail) will be prominent. As so much food is offered, it is not expected that every dish be finished, but rather shared at will and served at ease. Eating a Cypriot meze is a social event.

In the [Balkans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkans), meze is very similar to [Mediterranean](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean_cuisine) [antipasti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipasto) in the sense that cured cold-cuts, cheese and salads are dominant ingredients and that it typically doesn't include cooked meals. In [Serbia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbia), [Croatia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croatia), [Bosnia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina" \o "Bosnia and Herzegovina)and [Montenegro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Montenegro) it includes hard or creamy cheeses, [kajmak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kajmak" \o "Kajmak) (clotted cream) or [smetana](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smetana_(dairy_product)) cream, [salami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salami), [ham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ham" \o "Ham)and other forms of "suho/suvo meso" (cured pork or beef), [kulen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kulen" \o "Kulen) ([paprika](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paprika) flavoured, cured sausage), cured bacon, [ajvar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajvar" \o "Ajvar), and various pastry; In [Bosnia and Herzegovina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bosnia_and_Herzegovina), depending on religious food restrictions one obeys, meze excludes pork products and replaces them with [sudžuk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sujuk" \o "Sujuk) (dry, spicy sausage) and [pastrami](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pastrami)-like cured beef. In southern Croatia, [Herzegovina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herzegovina) and Montenegro more mediterranean forms of cured meat like [pršut](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosciutto" \o "Prosciutto) and [panceta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pancetta" \o "Pancetta) and regional products like [olives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olive) are common. [Albanian-style](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albanian_cuisine) meze platters typically include [prosciutto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosciutto) ham, salami and brined cheese, accompanied with roasted bell peppers (*capsicum*) or green olives marinated in olive oil with garlic. In [Bulgaria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulgarian_cuisine), popular mezes are [lukanka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lukanka" \o "Lukanka) (a spicy sausage), [soujouk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soujouk" \o "Soujouk) (a dry and spicy sausage), [sirene](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sirene" \o "Sirene) (a white brine cheese). In [Macedonia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macedonian_cuisine) most popular mezes are [Shopska salad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shopska_salad" \o "Shopska salad) made with tomatoes, cucumbers, onion, peppers and feta cheese, Also [Ajvar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ajvar" \o "Ajvar) and [Pindjur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pindjur" \o "Pindjur) are the most popular mezes made in Macedonia for over 100 years ago. In [Romania](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romania), mezelic means quick appetizer and includes [Zacuscă](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zacusc%C4%83" \o "Zacuscă), cheeses and salamis, often accompanied by [Țuică](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C8%9Auic%C4%83" \o "Țuică).

Alcoholic accompaniment[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Meze&action=edit&section=3)]

*Meze* is generally accompanied by the distilled drinks [rakı](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raki_(alcoholic_beverage)" \o "Raki (alcoholic beverage)), [arak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arak_(drink)), [ouzo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ouzo), [Aragh Sagi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aragh_Sagi" \o "Aragh Sagi), [rakia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rakia" \o "Rakia), [mastika](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mastika" \o "Mastika), or [tsipouro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsipouro" \o "Tsipouro). It may also be consumed with beer, wine and other alcoholic drinks. Cyprus Brandy (served [neat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bartending_terminology)) is a favourite drink to accompany *meze* in Cyprus, although lager or wine are popular with some.

The same dishes, served without alcoholic drinks, are termed "muqabbilat" (starters) in Arabic.

Serving traditions[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Meze&action=edit&section=4)]

In [Bulgaria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulgaria), meze is served primarily at the consumption of wine, [rakia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rakia" \o "Rakia) and [mastika](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mastika" \o "Mastika), but also accompanying other alcoholic drinks that are not local to the region. In addition to traditional local foods, meze can include nuts, sweets or pre-packaged snacks. The term meze is generally applied to any foods and snacks consumed alongside an alcoholic beverage. In Greece, meze is served in restaurants called *mezedopoleíon* and *tsipourádiko* or *[ouzerí](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ouzer%C3%AD" \o "Ouzerí)*, a type of [café](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caf%C3%A9) that serves [ouzo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ouzo) or [tsipouro](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsipouro" \o "Tsipouro). A *tavérna* (tavern) or *estiatório* (restaurant) offer a mezé as an *orektikó* (appetiser). Many restaurants offer their house *poikilía* ("variety")—a platter with a smorgasbord of mezédhes that can be served immediately to customers looking for a quick or light meal. Hosts commonly serve mezédhes to their guests at informal or impromptu get-togethers, as they are easy to prepare on short notice. *Krasomezédhes* (literally "wine-meze") is a meze that goes well with wine; *ouzomezédhes* are meze that goes with ouzo.

See also[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Meze&action=edit&section=5)]

* ***[icon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Foodlogo2.svg)***[***Food portal***](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portal:Food)
* [Anju](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anju_(food))
* [Antipasti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antipasti)