

# **Atlas of Lebanese Traditional Products**

***A New Path towards Valorization of our  
Tradition and Territories***

***June 24, 2008***

***Why are traditional foods important?***



# Lebanese Traditional Foods

Numerous important dimensions:

- Cultural (Heritage, identity, dialogue among civilizations .....
- Socioeconomic development (rural development, empowerment of women, poverty alleviation and employment creation, mitigating the flight from rural areas)
- Nutritive value



# ***Is our Traditional Diet Healthy?***



# Lebanese Traditional Foods, Nutrition and Health

- Lebanese traditional diet bears many aspects typical of the **Mediterranean Diet**
  - whole grains, fruits and vegetables, olive oil, moderate amounts of dairy products
- Positive impact on **health** (reduction of mortality and chronic disease risk)
- **Diversification and variety** (help ensure that essential nutrients are supplied in adequate amounts)

# Looking at specific traditional food products.....

## ■ *Kishk:*

- Fermented and dried food mixture (yoghurt and burghol)
- It is one of the oldest culinary foods, still prepared in the same "traditional" way .
- Excellent nutritive value
  - Amino-acid balance
  - Good source of energy
  - Good source of calcium, phosphorous
  - Easily digested



# Freek or Freekeh

- Prepared from the immature grains of durum wheat, at the milky stage
  - Culinary use similar to rice
- Better nutritive value than rice:
  - Higher protein
  - Higher vitamins and minerals contents
  - Good source of fiber
- Freekeh comes from a plant that is well adapted to the region and can be grown locally quite successfully (no need to import)



# Carob molasses



- Mainly composed of carbohydrate and contains significant quantity of fiber.
  - rich in insoluble fiber and polyphenols
- Traditionally known to be used for the improvement of bowel function (management of constipation)
- May suppress appetite
- May improve blood lipid profile

# ***Is Our Diet Still Traditional?***



## In many aspects **Yes:**

- Lebanese traditional products **SIMPLY TASTE GOOD!**
- Lebanese still prepare traditional recipes/products which are passed from mother to daughter from one generation to the other
- The diet has retained some of its healthy traditional Mediterranean characteristics

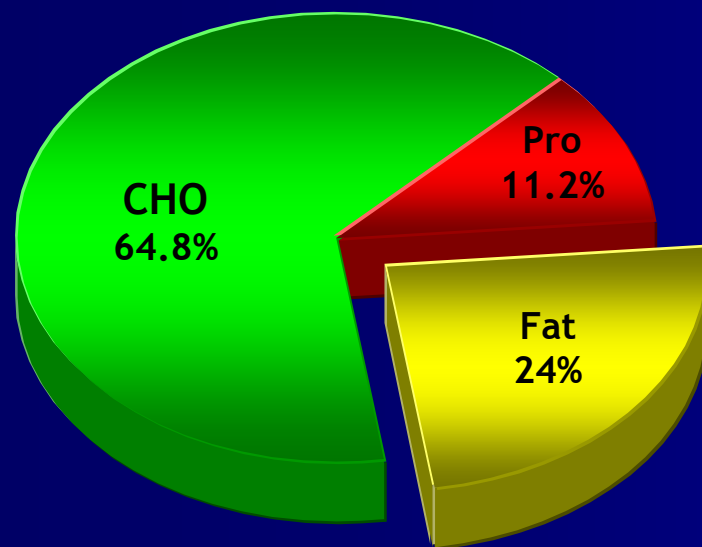
## In other aspects, No

- Nutrition transition
- Westernization of dietary practices
- Consequences of modernity on food products
  - more imported products,
  - more industrialized products,
  - more meat-based products,
  - more exotic products,
  - more sugar

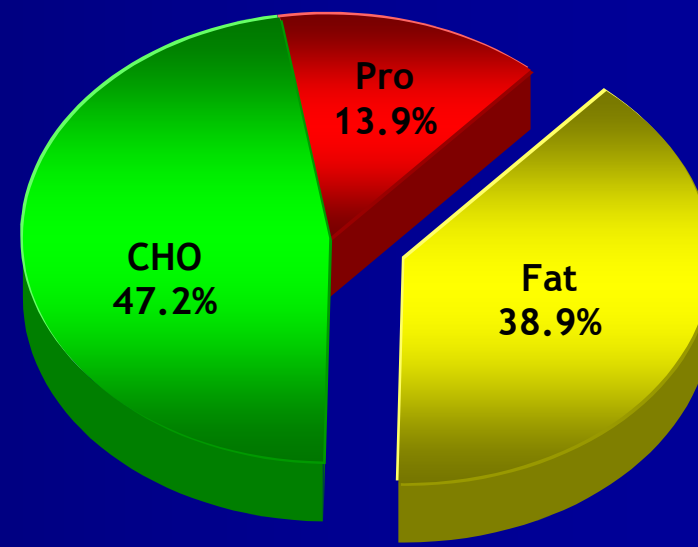
## Trends in the share of the main food groups to Dietary Energy Supply (DES), Lebanon

Food groups	% of DES					
	1965-67	1972-74	1979-81	1986-88	1993-95	2000-2002
Cereals (excl. beer)	49	45	40	38	35	33
Vegetable oils	8	11	11	12	14	13
Sweeteners	11	13	12	11	11	10
Fruits and vegetables	9	10	8	12	14	11
Pulses, nuts, oilcrops	6	5	7	8	8	10
Meat and offals	7	6	7	6	6	8
Milk and eggs	6	5	7	5	5	6
Animal fats	3	3	4	4	3	2
Starchy roots	2	2	3	3	4	4
Other	1	1	1	1	2	2

## Food pattern changes in Lebanese population from 1961 to 2003



1961



2003

***Are we on the way of losing  
our traditional diet ?***

# *The Challenge we face today is to*

- *Respect and retain our traditional food knowledge*
  - The “Atlas of Lebanese traditional products” is an important step in the promotion and valorization of traditional food products

***Where do we go from  
here?***

To preserve, encourage and promote **production** and **consumption** of traditional/ethnic foods by the public



To train rural communities on **innovative** and **safe** production of traditional foods (HACCP, etc.)



To transform the production of traditional foods into a **profitable** SME enterprise



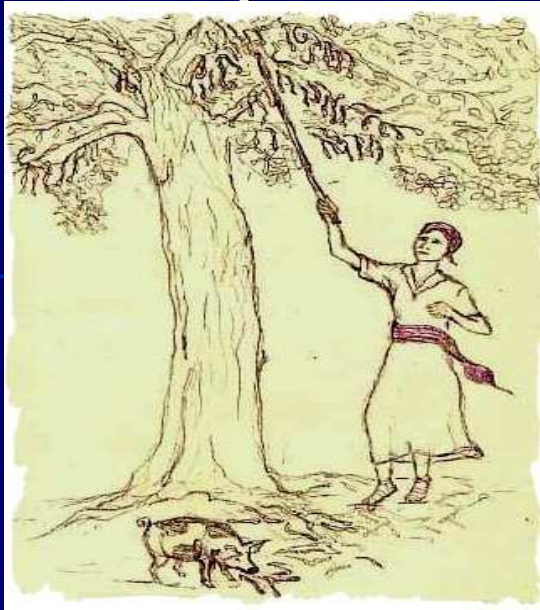
**Research: Nutritive value**



**Attractive marketing** of products  
(Improvement in packaging and design)

*Innovation  
and  
sustainability*

# Example of Carob: Possible Directions!!!!



CBG Factory

Syrups



Chocolate



Powder



Animal Food



Pastry



Tea

## The Example of carob

This is expected to contribute towards the creation of a **new rural agro-industry** that would:

- create in the medium term up to **400 new jobs**
- generate a yearly value added well over **5 million USD**

***This Atlas should thus be viewed as an "invitation to all interested people in the culinary heritage to join their efforts in order to preserve and promote this heritage", which is both healthy and profitable for all!***